

Wind section leads way in concerto of cant

UNWITTING evidence can be the most telling. Exasperated by the gutter-quality of the questions Labour MPs were asking at Treasury Questions yesterday, Philip Oppenheim, the Exchequer Secretary, exploded.

"So catty!" he shouted, "so silly, that..."

At this point we could see Mr Oppenheim racking his brains for something so abysmal as to be comparable with Opposition tactics. This did not take him long.

"...so silly that the 'demon eyes' [Tory campaign] looked positively cerebral, and spiritual by comparison."

What a pass things have come to when, to demonstrate the depth of their contempt for

rival tactics, MPs now insist that these plumb even greater depths than their own!

Oppenheim's boss, Kenneth Clarke, was in the doghouse again. In his habitual, jolly way, he had apparently used the phrase "you can't win them all" in response to the loss of thousands of jobs at Ford's plant at Halewood. One begins to understand Mr Clarke's fellow-feeling with his continental counterparts, who do not seem obliged to pick their way with such delicacy through the minefield of media sensitivities. A French Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, I remember, reacted to a postmen's strike in the 1970s with the quip: "Only a moron



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

would be a postman in the first place." One of his colleagues, asked how he explained the overwhelming opposition local residents were putting up to the erection of a nuclear power station, replied: "If you want to drain the marsh, don't consult the frogs." There is a place for our Chancellor in European politics.

As Opposition MPs summoned up what synthetic indignation they could over the Halewood "gaffe", Clarke sat on the Front Bench yesterday,

cheeks puffed out and grinning a little self-consciously, like a naughty schoolboy secretly proud of his misdeed, and intent on brazening it out.

He maintained the same mien ten minutes later, sitting beside John Major at Prime Minister's Questions. This was Mr Major's first of the year. How many left to go? We could even be into single figures, and the same could be true of Tony Blair as Opposition Leader. The kick-off to 1997 yesterday was pretty dis-

mal for both of them. Grim-faced Barry Legg (C, Milton Keynes SW) asked Major to join him in condemning the man who had said that taking Ecstasy cheered him up. Anything that cheered Mr Legg up would be worth a try.

Labour began an orchestrated campaign from the backbenches, huffing and puffing over their scare (which they patently do not believe) about alleged Tory plans to impose VAT on food.

In this concerto of cant, their Leader plays the solo instrument — a plaintive oboe — while the backbenchers join in with wind, strings and percussion. The Tories' contribution is to squeak and gasp with indignation, their own solist,

Major, stamping his feet and crying foul.

Yesterday Blair seemed to have hit on a foolproof formula: ask Major if in 1992 he did or did not ("yes or no") deny he would raise VAT; watch him squirm; accuse him of planning to tax food (starve pensioners, massacre babies, strangle kittens) then, when he denies any such plan, remind everyone that this is what he said about VAT, too.

Cheer? Indeed. Unfair? Undoubtedly. But it's a game both sides can play, and both sides will. From one unidentified backbench voice yesterday came the shout "Bloody fools!" The voice was quickly silenced by the Chair. But it spoke for many of us.

Labour in U-turn on bugging proposals

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR withdrew its support from key parts of the Police Bill yesterday, leaving Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, fighting to head off a defeat in the Lords over proposals to increase police bugging powers.

Jack Straw, the Shadow Home Secretary, and Labour's home affairs team bowed to mounting criticism from judges, the legal profession, and the press over the "intrusive surveillance" powers and came out in support of judicial curbs on the use of bugging.

Within hours of Labour ending its alliance with the Government, Government tabled concessions to the Bill. But critics last night said the Government had failed to go far enough.

Lord Bingham of Cornhill, the Lord Chief Justice, is expected to attend Monday's debate and may, along with Conservative peers such as Lord Alexander of Weedon QC, vote in favour of the Labour amendments.

Last night the Government conceded that when chief constables authorise police to

enter premises and place listening devices, the Commissioner, the senior judge who will monitor the use of the powers, must be notified as soon as practicable. However, the crucial authority to make the decision will remain with the police, although it is subject to scrutiny.

Secondly, sensitive cases such as those involving lawyers, journalists and doctors who hold confidential information, will have to be scrutinised by the Commissioner within 48 hours.

The surveillance however may have taken place by then, or be under way. The Commissioner will have specific power to quash the authorisations, even if they are going on.

Thirdly, the authorisations by the chief constables can now only run for three months, not six, or 72 hours in the case of emergencies.

Mr Howard said the Government would fight Opposition amendments designed to "second guess" chief constables by giving the decision on the use of surveillance to the Commissioner.

He said: "I believe these are all important improvements. They show the Government is determined to strike the right balance between the operational effectiveness of these crucial techniques and ensuring that a careful watch is kept on their use."

But last night the Law Society, the Bar, Liberty and others who have all campaigned strongly against the Bill were lining up in support of Labour's more far-reaching amendments.

Labour proposes that the prior approval of the judge acting as a Commissioner should be needed before premises are entered to place listening devices.



Jenny the ship's cat had to be restrained by the crew to protect the enemy

City fox surrenders after brush with battleship's cat

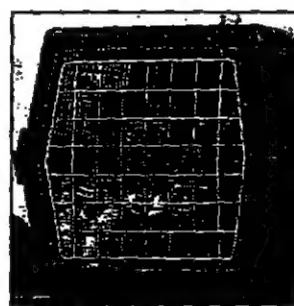
By MICHAEL HORNSEY

BRITAIN'S only surviving Second World War cruiser, HMS Belfast, added to her illustrious battle honours yesterday when Jenny, the black-and-white ship's cat, saw off a sneak attack by an urban fox.

The crew were going about their duties on the warship, moored on the South Bank opposite the Tower of London, when they spotted the intruder on the quarter-deck at 0930 hours and the order went out to repel boarders.

Jon Wurzel, HMS Belfast's director, said: "The fox had stroled across the gangway unnoticed. Jenny was staring herself at the time but went straight into action. She chased the fox into the wardroom and, in the best traditions of the Navy, engaged the enemy more closely."

"It was not much of a contest. The fox, although larger, was terrified and took shelter under an electricity



The fox, safe behind bars

generator. If members of the crew had not been there to pull Jenny off she would undoubtedly have inflicted heavy damage."

The crew managed to confine the spitting and hissing cat in another room and kept the fox, a three-year-old male, penned in until the arrival of John Williams, an RSPCA animal careman.

If not quite holed below the waterline, the fox had sustained a nasty bite on its back. It was taken to the RSPCA's animal hospital in Putney, in

south-west London, where the wound was cleaned and antibiotics administered.

"We will release the fox somewhere in the Southwark area," Mr Williams said. "It is vital the fox is returned to its own territory otherwise it would be attacked by other urban foxes."

"People think that foxes pose a threat to domestic cats, but a cat will always see a fox off. In the open a fox will always take care to stay well out of reach."

There will be no extra rations for Jenny, who is a touch on the portly side, but plans are afoot to present her with a mock General Service Medal for conduct well beyond the call of normal mousing and rattling duties.

HMS Belfast, owned by the Imperial War Museum since 1971, opened the bombardment of the Normandy coast on D-Day in 1944 and also helped sink the German warship Scharnhorst in the Battle of the North Cape.

Princess plans new action on mines ban

FROM INIGO GILMOUR IN LUANDA

DIANA, Princess of Wales, last night vowed to continue her support for a world ban on landmines and accused politicians who had criticised her of being "unhelpful".

In a parting shot at ministers who had complained about her call for a ban on antipersonnel mines, the Princess said: "I'm not a political figure. The fact is I'm a humanitarian figure, always have been, always will be."

In a statement shortly before she left Angola, the Princess said that her "first-hand experience" of the suffering caused by landmines "has convinced me that I must play a part in the worldwide campaign to ban them."

"I hope that my visit will encourage others to join the campaign and ease the plight of the victims of landmines here in Angola and all over the world," she added.

Earlier, at Red Cross headquarters in the capital, Luanda, the Princess was dismissive of the controversy her visit to the war-ravaged country has generated. She said that the political furor was "merely a distraction".

"It is not helpful, things like that," she said. "But it does happen when a campaign is entwined with a political issue. I understand that."

The Princess was in Angola this week to lend her support to the Red Cross campaign for a worldwide ban on landmines, despite severing her official connections with the charity six months ago.

The Princess said that she hoped to visit Bosnia, Cambodia and Afghanistan as a Red Cross volunteer. "There are so many countries that need help in some way and millions of landmines sitting dormant. Someone has got to do something."

"I see this as a long term commitment," she said, although the Princess emphasised that this did not mean she would re-establish links with other charities.

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Clegg case referred to Court of Appeal

The paratrooper Lee Clegg is to have his conviction for the murder of a teenage girl referred to the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal. Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, announced that he would refer the case "in the light of new forensic evidence" compiled since Lance Corporal Clegg's conviction in 1993 for the killing of Karen Reilly in west Belfast in 1990. His supporters say that the evidence, based on a series of ballistic and forensic tests, shows that the shots fired by the paratrooper were legal and identifies a different soldier, as firing the bullet which killed Miss Reilly, who was 18.

E-coli claims 17th victim

The E-coli epidemic claimed its seventeenth victim yesterday with the death of an elderly woman at a nursing home near Falkirk. North Valley Health Board said that the prisoner had been treated at Falkirk and District Royal Infirmary but had spent the last few weeks at the nursing home in Bankfoot. Three other pensioners at the home have died since the outbreak started last November. Two residents are still said to be poorly.

Fowl shooting ban lifted

A ban on the shooting of wildfowl, imposed on January 10 because of the cold weather, will be lifted from 9am tomorrow after several days of milder conditions and an improvement in the birds' condition. The decision by the Department of the Environment allows the shooting of duck, geese and waders until the season ends on January 31. Shooters are still being urged to observe a voluntary restraint.

Pact on benefit cheats

Britain and Canada have signed an international agreement to swap intelligence about social security cheats. Peter Lilley, the Social Security Secretary, announced his intention to take his fight against benefit fraud worldwide after expatriates were found to be abusing the system. British taxpayers pay £1 billion of benefits to 800,000 people abroad each year, including £125 million to those who have emigrated to Canada.

Benefits fraudster jailed

A civil servant at the Department of Social Security who masterminded a £233,000 benefits fraud was jailed for five years. Edwin Adams, 38, of Edgware, north London, keyed scores of false claims into his computer using the names and National Insurance numbers of West Africans who had left Britain. Harrow Crown Court was told. A team of "cashiers" then claimed the money.

Cult children released

Claire Scott was flying home last night after freeing her twin sons and daughter from the International Saturday Group cult run by their grandmother, Nadine, near Lisbon in Portugal. "I understand they will miss their friends but I want to get them out of the clutches of this organisation," said Mrs Scott. She added that she feared they might try to abscond back to Portugal.

Plea for Catholic education

The Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Basil Hume, has demanded that Roman Catholics send their children to Catholic schools to "defeat" the "decay" of morals in society and prevent the further "marginalisation" of religion. He was speaking amid concern that wealthy Catholics are sending their children to other public schools, forcing Catholic schools to take pupils of other faiths.

Hair-raising feat rewarded

A couple in their seventies received a good citizenship award for their part in the first prosecution in Britain to rely on a DNA test on hair taken at the scene of the crime. Doreen Rookes, from Plymouth, grabbed the evidence from a burglar who was jailed for 18 months. She and her husband, Donald, were commended by Chief Constable John Evans of Devon and Cornwall police.

Housing officer cleared

A housing officer has been cleared by a disciplinary panel investigating a complaint that he had warned residents on an estate that a convicted paedophile had moved in nearby. Michael Wood had been suspended on full pay by Birmingham City Council since November. He was accused of breaching confidentiality rules over George Taylor, who had been jailed for an attack on a girl.

Town clerk suspended

The town council clerk who was at the centre of a row when it emerged he was being paid a salary of £71,000 has been suspended pending a second investigation within a year. The new probe has been launched into an alleged overpayment of £4,000 to Michael Wheaton, 52, clerk to Goole Town Council in East Yorks, after a report by the district auditor.

Musical pleasure in store

A CD that features five minutes of lift noises goes on sale next Monday. Great Lift Journeys, of Norwich, by Dominic Russell-Price and Peter Roberts, is a leading role to the lift in the Debenhams store in their home city, with shoppers' chat and doors opening. "When you look into it, you find out that people are genuinely interested in lifts," Mr Russell-Price said.

Channel 5 viewers face £500m bill for new television aerials

Continued from page 1

be available until the channel starts broadcasting. The Independent Television Commission estimates that as many as three million of the 15 million homes within the Channel 5 broadcast area may be affected. But the Confederation of Aerial Industries, which represents 420 of the nation's 2,000 aerial installers, said

that the figure could be as high as four million.

Aerial installers expect a sales bonanza. Chris Garvin, an engineer at Aerial Services in London, said: "This will create much more work for us, but I think a lot of people won't bother with new aerials because of the expense."

NTL, the American-owned com-

pany that installed Channel 5's national transmission network, said that many viewers will need new aerials because, in almost all cases, the channel uses lower power signals than the BBC, independent television or Channel 4. Bruce Randall, a spokesman for NTL, said that if they had used the same or greater power, they would have interfered with the

reception quality of all five terrestrial channels.

City analysts said that the aerial problem could damage Channel 5's audience ratings if many of the households with poor reception chose not to upgrade their aerials. With fewer viewers, Channel 5 would have to drop its advertising rates.

Channel 5 said that, although it

had never hidden the fact that many aerials would need to be replaced, it had not publicised it widely either. A spokesman for the station said: "We do not want people to rush out and buy new aerials until Channel 5 starts broadcasting because not everyone will need them."

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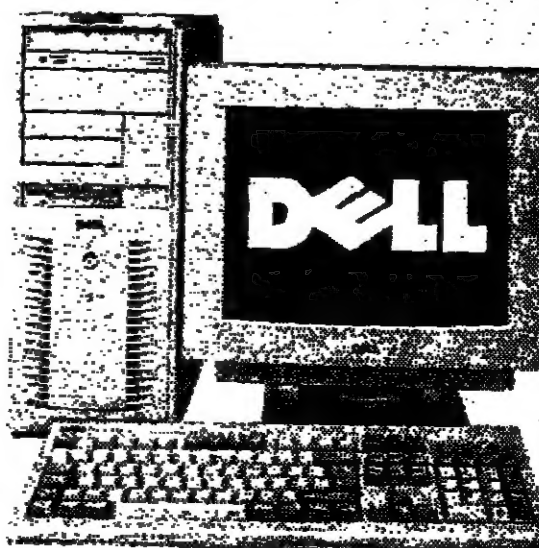
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Father told sons: 'We have to bluff it out'

Boys 'treated like dirt smashed mother's head'

By PAUL WILKINSON

TWO teenage boys bludgeoned their mother to death after enduring years of emotional and mental torture, a court was told yesterday.

Glenn Howells, 17, and his brother John, 15, smashed their mother Eve's skull at least ten times with a hammer after their father, David, promised them jet skis and a holiday, Leeds Crown Court was told.

But Franz Muller, QC, for the prosecution, said that although the boys — who were 15 and 14 when their mother was killed — tried to make the murder of the "strict and uncaring" religious education teacher look like a bungled burglary, they were caught out by forensic tests and covert tapes of conversations with their father after they were arrested.

The court was told that the body of Mrs Howells, 48, was found on a beanbag in the living room of the family bungalow on August 31, 1995. That evening her husband had gone to play darts at a local pub as usual. John and Glenn were at home with their mother and after John had given her a pedicure, as he usually did on a Thursday night, she told them to take the dog for a walk. The boys told police that when they returned she told them to go out again because they had not exercised the dog properly.

Glenn told police that he had found the body in the blood-spattered living room as he returned. He said his brother, who had been riding his bike, returned a few minutes later.

Mr Muller said that Mr Howells had "the perfect alibi". But this was an essential part of the plan he said, which was devised by all three.

Mr Howells, 48, of Huddersfield, west Yorkshire, and his sons all deny murder. Glenn admits manslaughter on the grounds of provocation.

Mr Muller said Mr Howells, a heavy drinker, stood to inherit £155,000 after his wife's death. The couple had married in 1972, but Mr Howells



Clockwise from top left: Glenn Howells, his younger brother John, father David, and his wife Eve, whom they are accused of killing

had found out a few months before that she had been involved in a 12-year affair with his best friend, Russell Hirst, the boys' godfather who was named in both their wills.

But the main motive, Mr Muller said, came from the way Mrs Howells treated her family. The teacher, who "frightened to death" pupils at her school, had an eating disorder, and was only six stone when she died. She kept a padlock on the freezer and was preoccupied with her family's eating habits, ran all the family finances, dominated her husband and children and continually screamed abuse at them.

Defectives quickly became suspicious of the boys after examining evidence from the murder scene. Mrs Howells's position indicated she had

been at ease with the person who attacked her, and had made no attempt to defend herself. Blood was found on Glenn's socks, but the only place on the carpet where it had been trodden on was the position where the killer would have stood.

The next day when all three identified Mrs Howells's body, Glenn showed little emotion until the others cried, and soon regained his composure. A policeman noticed Glenn wink twice at his brother, and smirk.

The teenagers were arrested three weeks after the murder and taped secretly when they spoke to their father. On one occasion their father said: "We have just got to bluff it out. If you two break, I'm in as well, so we've got to stick together."

Later Glenn said: "You said

we were going to have a good life," and his father replied: "Yes, we are. I promise you I will wait for you... We will have a new life together... We will have plenty of money."

Mr Howells was arrested nearly a month after his sons and while on remand he told a cell mate, Barry Johnson, that they had been "excellent all the way through". Mr Muller said: "Mr Johnson asked him how he'd planned it, and he said he'd chosen his elder son because he was the bigger."

In November 1996, the younger son spoke to the police again and said the murder was planned by the three of them and his role was to get rid of the evidence. He said: "She didn't treat us like her sons, she treated us like dirt. We'd all come to an agreement — my brother was to do it and I'd get rid of the clothes." The court was told that John later took police to a canal in Wakefield where the hammer was found. The boy said that all three of them had considered killing his mother when they were on holiday the previous year by pushing her off the balcony. However, the plan failed because her room was on the first floor.

Mrs Howells also closed a joint account she had with her husband, opening one in each of their names instead and putting £51,000 in her account and £100 in her husband's. Last November, while John was on remand, he made a statement in which he admitted that it had been agreed among the three of them that they would kill his mother. He said: "We all knew it would be better for us when she was dead." John said he was confessing in the hope of getting a reduced sentence.

Gary Burrell, defending Glenn, said: "It will be Glenn Howells's defence that over a period of some five years, perhaps a little longer, his mother subjected him to severe and repeated emotional and mental abuse and cruelty until he reached the stage where he could no longer tolerate that behaviour, lost his self-control, and took her life." The case continues.



Lady Apsley with Oliver Lomansey and Ryan. Mr Lomansey, who was sleeping rough, is now working

Lady gives the tramp a helping hand to find a home and a job

By ROBIN YOUNG

WHENEVER she went shopping Lady Apsley, a former beauty queen, noticed a forlorn beggar, wrapped in blankets against the cold, with his dog.

Now this story of a lady and a tramp has reached a happy conclusion in Cirencester, Gloucestershire. She has found them temporary accommodation — and a job for him as well.

At first, Lady Apsley, the second wife of Lord Apsley, gave the beggar £1, but as he showed no sign of moving on, she decided she must do more. She went to a delicatessen and bought a beef sandwich for him and a turkey sandwich for his dog.

They talked. "He seemed such a nice and intelligent person," she said yesterday. She took him to the office of a local charity for the homeless, enabling Oliver Lomansey, 25, and his abasian Ryan, 9, to get a roof over their heads after 14 weeks on the road, and find him

a job as an engineer's chairman on the Cirencester bypass project.

Lady Apsley, 31, formerly Sara Chapman, a member of a bookshop-owning family in Lyme Regis, Dorset, whose family motto is "Keep Thy Faith", said: "Someone begging on the street is an unusual sight in Cirencester and it compelled me to help. When I first saw him I thought it was pretty pathetic that someone was so badly off and there was I off to Tesco."

"He seemed such a nice chap, young and intelligent, well-mannered, and grateful for the help. He did not treat me as if I was being patronising at all."

"I thought back to last year when I married Lord Apsley and moved to Cirencester. People were so kind and welcoming to me and I do not see why everyone is not treated the same way."

She said that she was still helping Mr Lomansey look for permanent accommodation, which was proving difficult because of his dog. Lady Apsley lives

with her husband in a mansion house in the £30 million, 3,500-acre Cirencester Park (forestry estate, which Lord Apsley will one day inherit from his father, Earl Bathurst). The estate includes the Cirencester Park polo ground where the Prince of Wales, a close friend of Lord Apsley and Lord Bathurst, often plays.

Mr Lomansey was hard at work on the bypass yesterday. "I was very surprised that she even took the time to talk to me, let alone help. I thought she was a real lady, and it turned out she really was," he said. He had been living rough since he split with his girlfriend and moving to Cirencester to live with friends. His mother lives in Australia and he is estranged from his father.

Jane Hall, of the Cirencester Homeless Young Persons Project, said: "A lot of people would look down their noses and think: 'On your bike sunbeam.' I think it is marvellous that someone like Lady Apsley has stopped and shown that she cares."

Somali boy, 14 jailed for rape of lost tourist

A SOMALI refugee yesterday became one of the youngest rapists to be jailed after being convicted of attacking a tourist when he was 12. Abdi Yusuf, now 14, assaulted the 21-year-old woman after offering to help her when she became lost. Instead of taking her to a Tube station he led her to a park and raped her.

At the Old Bailey yesterday, Yusuf, who is 6ft 2in and lives in Willesden, northwest London, was sentenced to five years' imprisonment in a youth treatment centre. He already has a conviction for possessing a knife after another incident involving a woman.

Judge Neil Denison, QC, Common Sergeant in the City of London, told Yusuf that he would have been given a longer sentence if he had been older. His school record, although good academically, was one of disruption and intimidation of fellow pupils. He had been expelled from two schools. The judge said the boy's traumatic experiences during the Somali civil war might explain his behaviour, but did not excuse it.

During the trial the court was told that the victim had come to London last September to enquire about language courses and been in the city for only a day. She became lost and bumped into Yusuf. He offered to help her, but took her in the opposite direction to the Tube station to a park near her home. She said he put his arm around her, but she could not take him seriously because he was only a boy.

He then pushed her over, told her he had a knife and assaulted her. He was arrested at his home where his muddy clothes were drying on a radiator. He said he had been playing football. Ann Mallahieu, QC, for Yusuf, said he had found it hard to adjust after his experiences in Mogadishu.



Zoe Evans: was seen with a man

Clothes found in hunt for missing girl

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

HOPES of finding nine-year-old Zoe Evans alive were fading last night after police found two pieces of bloodstained clothing. The pieces, one from a man and one from a girl, were found during a search of open land close to her home in Warrminster, Wiltshire.

Initial tests showed that the stains on each piece of clothing were from the same blood group. DNA tests were being conducted yesterday to see if the blood group matched that of the missing girl. The results will not be available for several days.

On Wednesday police disclosed that there had been two sightings of the child with a shaven-headed young man on Saturday afternoon. She was last seen alive on Friday evening. Police had more than 150 calls from the public, some of them offering possible names for the man seen with the girl, including local men.

Warning for Carlton over royal debate

By ALEXANDRA FREAN
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

CARLTON Television was accused yesterday of "losing control" of its controversial televised debate on the monarchy broadcast last week.

In a rare comment on the merits of an individual programme, Peter Rogers, chief executive of the Independent Television Commission, said that he thought that the debate, which was staged before a studio audience of 3,000, was "substantially flawed" and of "poor quality".

Although the programme, which attracted more than eight million viewers and 2.6 million telephone voters, had not broken any of the ITC's regulations, Mr Rogers warned Carlton that he would be "very disappointed" if it made other programmes using exactly the same format.

Mr Rogers said that he did not want to stifle innovation or force all current affairs programmes to be *erudite* and *elitist*. He nevertheless felt that *Monarchy — The Nation Decides* was not good television. There were too many panelists and the audience was too rowdy to allow proper debate, he said.

"I don't mean that they lost control in the sense that there was a riot, but some of the debate was drowned out by cat-calling from the audience. Heckling can be witty but it went beyond that," Mr Rogers told the Broadcasting Press Guild.

The Commission received 36 complaints about the programme, but is unlikely to uphold any. At least half were from viewers complaining that they could not get through on the programme's telephone voting lines. Many invited guests complained they had been unable to make themselves heard.

Kevin Quigley, principal of the college, said the fuss was "a storm in a teacup". He added: "It is a creative adaptation of the original mystery plays. The text in terms of what Christ says in His major speeches is more or less taken straight from Luke's and John's Gospels, but spoken by a female student." He said the decision to portray Christ as a woman was "incidental", adding: "That is not the issue."

Mr Kieran Conry, director of communications for the Catholic Church in England and Wales, said: "I just hope people know what they are in for when they go through the doors."

'Jessica Christ' play upsets Catholics

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

A ROMAN Catholic college has upset the Catholic hierarchy by putting on a play with Christ portrayed as a woman and Mary Magdalene as a rent boy.

The Right Rev John Brewer, Bishop of Lancaster, condemned the "distortions of the facts" in the play, which depicts Jesus as "Jessica" and Mary Magdalene as "Mario the rent boy" and is to be performed in his diocese next month.

Bishop Brewer, an ultra-conservative who heads the Catholic bishops' theological committee, said he regrets it is too late to cancel the production. In a letter to the principal of the Cardinal Newman College in Preston, Lancashire, the bishop wrote: "There seems to be no artistic justification and certainly no doctrinal justification for such a distortion of the facts."

He said it was no surprise members of the public had already complained.

In the play, which assumes the birth of "Jessica" Christ last Christmas and is set at around the time of "her" crucifixion 30 years later, Christ is betrayed by a woman, Jude, instead of Judas. Mary Magdalene, a follower of Christ out of whom He was said to have cast "seven devils", has become "Mario the rent boy".

The sixth-form college's student theatre group, *Limelight*, decided to put on the play as its *lethal* anniversary production. The work was created by staff and students and although it will be open to the public, most in the audience are likely to be college students. It will be performed just before the start of *Levi* and is

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THE TIMES FRIDAY JANUARY 17 1997

Chris Evans quits as BBC refuses a four-day week

By JOANNA BAILE

THE Radio 1 presenter Chris Evans resigned yesterday when his demands for a four-day week were refused.

Evans, who is the station's most popular presenter and is credited with singlehandedly reviving its fortunes, will leave his breakfast show at the end of March. He quit his £1 million-a-year contract only hours before it was announced that he had failed in his bid to set up a London radio station as one of 25 candidates for a new FM frequency.

The request by Evans, 30, for every Friday off was rejected by Radio 1's controller, Matthew Bannister, whom Evans nicknamed the "Fat Controller" on air. He is believed to have wanted the time off to concentrate on his weekly Channel 4 show *TFI Friday*, which is rumored to be under consideration for screening five times a week.

In a statement, Mr Bannister said: "Chris asked to renegotiate his contract with us to allow him to have every Friday off. This did not fit in with my plans for the schedule. He has therefore exercised his contractual right to give notice."

"Chris will have been at Radio 1 for exactly two years. He is an enormously talented broadcaster who has made a

MAKING WAVES ON THE RADIO

Evans has made outrageousness his stock-in-trade. His Radio 1 stunts include:

- Quizzing an assistant about her sex-life in a live broadcast.
- Features called "I'm in bed with my boyfriend" and "On the bog".
- Encouraging two female guests to strip.
- Telling a joke about the concentration camp victim Anne Frank.
- Provoking fury in Scotland on a visit by mocking Scottish accents, accusing farmers of having sex with their sheep and jeering at a local radio presenter's low salary.
- Offering £1,000 to any member of a Roadshow audience who could prove they had slept with one of his production team.
- Broadcasting a 50¢ about oral sex.
- Threatening to kick Ant & Dec, the former Lottery presenters, in the teeth and branding the producer of her *All You Need is Love* show a "scumbag".
- Describing children's television presenter Andi Peters as "talentless" and the MP David Mellor as "a joke".
- Calling on virgins to telephone the show if they planned to have sex over the next few weeks, and keep his team updated on their progress.

tremendous contribution to the network.

"His breakfast show is the most popular radio programme in the UK and also one of the most inventive. The replacement will be announced shortly."

Evans was unavailable for comment last night, but a source close to him said: "It has been obvious for some time that to write, produce and present ten hours of radio a

week and one hour of live TV is an incredibly tough workload. He has been run-down and very tired."

Evans, who will leave on March 27 after serving his notice, announced earlier this week that he would not be doing any more summer roadshows — live broadcasts from seaside resorts — complaining that he was "too old". Last autumn he negotiated a £7,000-a-week pay cut to

change the beginning of his show from 6.30am to 7am.

When he declared on *TFI Friday* that he was "mentally unstable" and medically unfit to be on the radio, Mr Bannister renegotiated his contract to double his holiday to 12 weeks, twice that enjoyed by other Radio 1 presenters.

Richard Branson, co-owner of Virgin Radio, announced that he had offered Evans a job after his resignation. Other lucrative offers from television and radio companies are forecast.

Despite his success, he has been heavily criticised for crude on-air jokes, insults directed at audience members and co-presenters, and bragging about his salary.

BBC insiders were privately gleeful that Mr Bannister had finally stood up to the man who criticised him on air, although the station was said to be in turmoil at the prospect of trying to find a replacement for the man who reversed its ratings slide by putting on 600,000 extra listeners when he replaced Steve Wright in April 1995.

■ A specialist alternative rock music radio station, XFM, aimed at 15- to 34-year-olds was last night awarded the last remaining FM franchise for London on 104.9 MHz. It beat 24 consortia, including Evans's.



Chris Evans: he quit when Radio 1 refused to renegotiate his contract

Fearless woman gives clues to brain

By NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

A WOMAN who has lost her sense of fear has provided scientists with clues about how the brain functions.

The woman, who is 56, suffered from epilepsy from the age of 28. To control the condition, doctors removed her amygdalae, almond-sized pieces of the brain found behind the ears, 18 years ago.

The operation helped to control the symptoms, but had unexpected consequences. It left her with a greatly reduced sense of danger and an inability to recognise fear and anger in the faces or voices of others.

The woman, named only as D.R., has been studied by Dr Andy Calder, a psychologist with the Medical Research Council's Applied Psychology Unit in Cambridge. In *Nature* Dr Calder and colleagues from the unit and from the University of Wales in Cardiff and St James's University Hospital in Leeds describe the tests they carried out.

Her hearing was normal, and she could recognise faces. She could also recognise and describe the contents of sentences read to her, when asked to categorise them as happy, angry or sad. But she could not recognise fearful expressions, or the tone of voice in which the sentences were read. By removing her amygdalae the surgeons had taken away her ability to perceive emotion in others.

"It used to be thought that all our emotions were controlled by the same part of the brain," Dr Calder says. "But increasingly we are coming to think that different parts may control different emotions. This woman's case is a further piece of evidence."

Dr Calder said the woman's condition affected her everyday life. Her husband had once prevented her from plunging her hand into a pan of boiling water.

She had also lost interest in many television programmes because they seemed pointless since she could not relate to plots which conveyed danger.

Britain comes bottom of the class in international maths test

By DAVID CHARTER
EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH adults came bottom in an international numeracy league published yesterday, with only half the success rate of the Japanese and French. Only 20 per cent of Britons aged 16 to 60 could answer 12 sums designed to reflect the basic mathematics needed in everyday life.

Young Britons performed worst, with 16 per cent of 16 to 24-year-olds answering every question correctly, compared with 29 per cent of 45 to 55-year-olds.

Japan topped the numeracy table with 43 per cent of respondents answering every question correctly, followed by France (40 per cent),

Holland (38), Denmark (36) and Sweden (34). Australia was second from bottom with 33 per cent.

About 20 per cent of Britons could answer only five questions correctly, but in The Netherlands only 4 per cent performed so poorly. One in ten of the 660 Britons questioned could not multiply six by 21; more than one in three could not work out the area of the room; and more than one in four could not work out 10 per cent of 7,900.

The survey, of a total of 5,936 people, was conducted for the Basic Skills Agency, a charity that encourages adult education. Its publication was coupled with research showing how numeracy problems can damage employment prospects as much as difficulty with words. Academics at City

University in London, who are monitoring the lives of 1,700 people born in 1958 for the National Child Development Study, found that more than one in three had "very low numeracy skills".

At the age of 37, men in the survey with poor numeracy were more prone to unemployment. They were more likely to be in manual jobs and had a lower weekly wage. Women were more likely to be in part-time jobs and only one in four with poor numeracy held a full-time job.

Alan Wells, director of the Basic Skills Agency, blamed low standards and expectations at school for adults' numeracy and literacy problems. "We don't have to be bottom of the league; it is not our destiny. But to start climbing

the table we need to raise expectations and aspirations, stop accepting low standards and motivate people to want to learn and improve."

Gillian Shepherd, the Education and Employment Secretary, promised to announce more initiatives later this month to tackle poor adult basic skills. "Poor standards of literacy and numeracy are unacceptable. If our growing economic success is to be maintained we must get the basics right for everyone," she said. "Countries will keep investing here at record levels only if they see that the workforce is up to the job. The Government's battle to improve the basics will continue."

Education, pages 36, 37

THE QUESTIONS

The questions in the numeracy survey were:

- 1 Subtract 1.78 from 5
- 2 Take away 2.43 from 5
- 3 Add together 5.5, 7.25 and 3.75
- 4 What is the total of 4.25, 6 and 7.74?
- 5 Multiply 6 x 21
- 6 Multiply 16 x 21
- 7 What is the area of a room 11 metres x 18 metres?
- 8 How many apples does each person get if a box of 72 is shared by six people?
- 9 What is 15 per cent of 700?
- 10 How many children are there in a crowd of 7,900 if the proportion is 10 per cent?
- 11 What is 5/6 of 900?
- 12 How many books are not in a sale if a third are in the sale and the total number is 420?

ANSWERS: 1 3.22, 2 2.57, 3 16.50, 4 17.99, 5 126, 6 336, 7 198 sq m, 8 12, 9 108, 10 750, 11 250, 12 280

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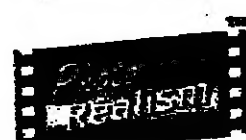
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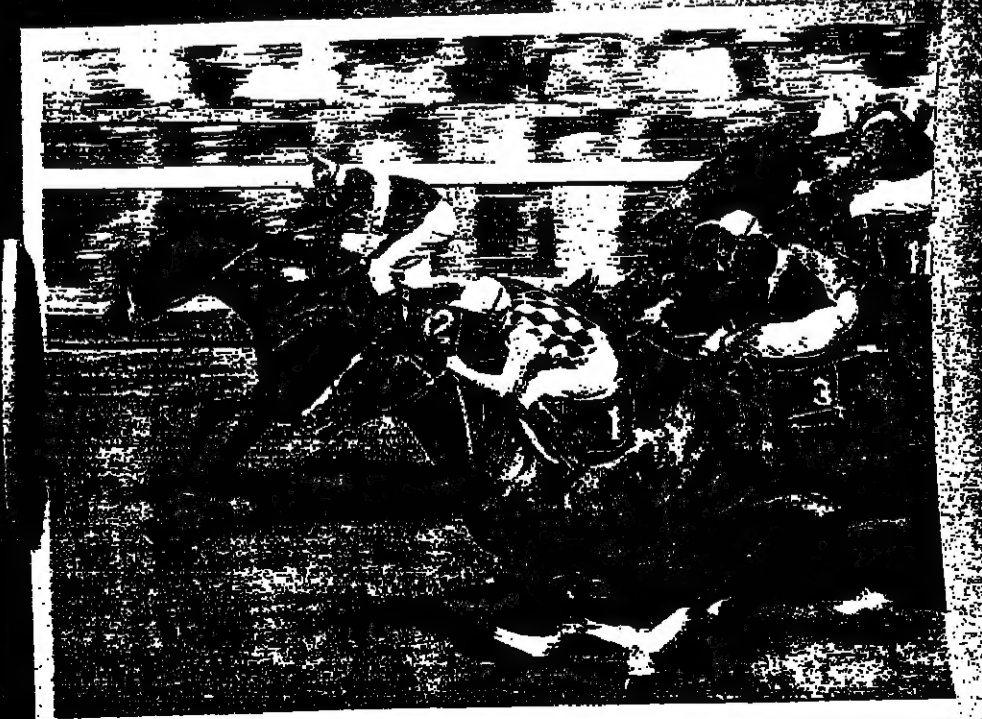


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THE TIMES FRIDAY JANUARY 17 1997

Transplants of pig organs may never be given approval

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

HUMAN transplants using pig organs should not go ahead in Britain until further studies have been made of the risks involved, the chairman of a government inquiry into the pioneering technique said yesterday. The studies could show that such operations should never take place.

Ian Kennedy, chairman of the Advisory Group on the Ethics of Xenotransplantation, said that there should be no human experiments before the risks of organ failure and the danger to the wider public from any transmission of animal viruses had been researched. The report of the inquiry, published yesterday, sounds repeated warnings about the inadequate state of current understanding of transplants using animal organs.

Members of the advisory group believe it will be at least 18 months before researchers have enough information about how a pig's organ will function in a human body, and even longer before they understand the threat posed by pig viruses. Scientists would then have to apply to the new Xenotransplantation Interim Regulatory Authority, announced yesterday by the Government to monitor the research, pending legislation, for permission to conduct the

first transplants to humans. The authority is to be chaired by Lord Habgood, former Archbishop of York and a pharmacologist.

Launching the report yesterday, Professor Kennedy, head of medical law and ethics at King's College London, said: "The authority will decide when, if ever, research on humans should be carried out. It doesn't follow that someone will conduct human trials. Maybe when they have done the research they will discover it is not ethically acceptable because the risk is too great."

He said it would be ethical to proceed with xenotransplantation only if the risks to patients and the population were "reduced to tolerable margins". The pigs were properly looked after and the cost of the research in terms of its impact on other medical or surgical treatments was acceptable.

International co-operation over the research would be needed because "viruses do not carry passports", he said. However, he admitted there was nothing to stop a company conducting human experiments in a foreign country where controls were more lax.

Professor Kennedy said: "The current demand for tissue cannot be met by transplants from human to human.

But we take the view very strongly that progress in this area must be maintained and if possible enhanced. Xenotransplantation must not be allowed to dominate the scene." He added that research on genetic therapies and artificial organs should be "encouraged and pursued".

Accepting the advisory group's recommendations, which are subject to three months' consultation, Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, said: "It is essential that the risks associated with xenotransplantation are better understood before the technique is used on human patients. The Interim Regulatory Authority will ensure that these questions are addressed."

Immunan, the Cambridge-based company that has pioneered the research in Britain, yesterday issued a thinly veiled threat that it would take its work abroad if restrictions here were too severe. Christopher Samler, chief executive, said: "There will come a point in the not-too-distant future when we can say we can learn nothing more, and we are satisfied that we can now proceed to clinical trials. While we hope we will continue in this country there are always options to approach it on a global basis."

Herb Sewell, Professor of Immunology at Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham, and a member of the committee, said there were forms of rejection that had not been overcome, there was insufficient understanding of how a "foreign" organ would respond to hormonal signals in a human body, and there were the risks of passing on animal viruses.

"Suppose research finds horrendous rejection problems. That for me would mean we say no [to research trials]. Suppose research shows retroviruses from pigs can be transmitted to human tissues in the lab. Without wishing to create a doomsday scenario, there is a possibility that not only could this lead to particular infections in the patient but the patient may pass on the infection to a wider public."



Immunan's researchers have been breeding pigs with organs that are not rejected in transplant



Stoneleigh Abbey, visited by Austen in 1806, is thought to be the model for Sotherton in *Mansfield Park*

£7m lottery grant saves stately home that caught Austen's unsparing eye

By MARCUS BINNEY

ONE of England's finest stately homes, held to be the model for Sotherton in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, has been saved by a £7.57 million Heritage Lottery Fund grant.

Stoneleigh Abbey in Warwickshire has been closed to the public for the past eight years as debts forced its trustees to sell furniture and halt even basic maintenance. Creditors included the Inland Revenue and Lloyds Bank.

Pieces of stone cornice have crashed to the ground and Baroque carving has crumbled away as roofs have failed and dry rot has taken hold. The roof of the vast Regency stable block has collapsed.

Founded in the 12th century, the abbey was acquired after the Reformation by a Lord Mayor of London, Sir Thomas Leigh, whose descendants held the estate until it was vested in a charitable trust in 1980.

Jane Austen went to stay in 1806 with the Rev Thomas Leigh who, in the manner of one of her novels, had unexpectedly inherited the house and estate. She found "long

avenues, dark rookeries and 26 bedchambers in the new part of the house and a great many (some very good ones) in the old".

Her description of Sotherton in *Mansfield Park*, "with its old-fashioned rooms, amply furnished in the taste of 50 years back," its walled gardens and chapel with a profusion of mahogany and "crimson cushions disappearing over the ledge of the family gallery above", almost certainly recalls her stay at Stoneleigh eight years earlier.

The plan is the brainchild of the entrepreneur Kit Martin, who has rescued nine homes in England and Scotland by converting them into houses while maintaining their character.

Mr Martin said: "I have long been looking for a house where I could show that residential conversion could go hand in hand with public access. The cost of endowing an entire house and estate of this size for the National Trust, or any other trust, is now so great that alternative solutions must be found."

The main staterooms and



Austen described "long avenues, dark rookeries"

263 hectares of park and woodland will be vested in a reformed Stoneleigh Abbey Preservation Trust, with new trustees, and opened to the public. Mr Martin will create nearly 30 houses in other parts of the house and nearby estate buildings.

Mr Martin said that virtually no alterations would be needed on buildings around the former abbey cloister, while other houses and cottages would be created in a service court and farm court

yard. "I expect the houses to range in price from £70,000 for a two-bedroom cottage to £500,000 for the largest five-bedroom house." In addition, some 15 new houses will be built out of sight, in place of derelict modern farm sheds.

Contents saved with the help of lottery funds include a collection of 62 oil paintings and sets of Baroque chairs. Most of the staterooms can be restored to the way they were when *Country Life* photographed the house in 1897.

Tony Bird, a local businessman who is chairman of the new trust said: "Over the next three years a major restoration of park and gardens will be carried out. We hope to open the park shortly and the house in two years time."

Funds for the restoration have also come from English Heritage and the European Regional Development Fund.

□ The go-ahead was given yesterday for construction work to begin on the Lowry Centre at Salford, a £127 million centre to incorporate visual and performing arts, which will be the North West's landmark millennium project.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Rifle team captain hid old bullets

A former captain of the Scottish rifle team who hid nearly 4,000 bullets and cartridges under his floorboards has been fined £300 at Stirling Sheriff Court after admitting offences under the Firearms Act. John Glen, 71, of Brig O'Turk, Stirling, found the ammunition left over from the Home Guard when he was clearing his late father's home. He was ordered to forfeit a gun not covered by his shotgun licence, and ammunition.

Farmer cleared

A farmer accused of running down a councillor after a planning dispute has been cleared of causing grievous bodily harm. David Morris's car hit Anthony Taylor, breaking his pelvis, but he told Worcester Crown Court that it was a "ghastly accident".

Lorry kills boy

A five-year-old boy was crushed to death under the wheels of a dustbin lorry in front of his mother and brother. Robert Norris had stepped into the path of the vehicle in Newbury. He was pronounced dead at the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

Escaped bull shot

Armed police shot and killed a bull after it escaped from a cattle market and scattered shoppers in the centre of Banbury, Oxfordshire. Lorry drivers used their vehicles to help to trap the animal at a service station. It was killed with a single shot.

Wedding chest

Records of 140 years of marriages in Greta Green have been bought for £13,000 by the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies. They were in a chest also containing letters to the Lang family, which oversaw marriages in the town from 1800 to 1939.

Lost porpoise

A porpoise has been seen in a stream near Barnby Dun, a South Yorkshire village 60 miles from the sea. The porpoise, identified by members of Thorpe Marsh nature reserve, probably took a wrong turn into the River Don from the Humber estuary.

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British and Russian archaeologists explore site long concealed behind Iron Curtain

Forgotten city yields treasures of Ancient Greek colonists

By DALYA ALBERGE
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH scholars are working alongside Russian archaeologists in a dig which has unearthed Ancient Greek jewellery studded with emeralds and rubies, a marble head of Aphrodite and thousands of gold coins from an Ancient Greek colony near the Black Sea.

The finds were made at the port city of Phanagoria, a community founded around 542 BC and spanning 185 acres. Phanagoria, on the modern-day Taman peninsula in the Russian Federation, was the second largest city of the Bosphoran kingdom.

Archaeologists estimate that they have so far excavated just 1 per cent of the area. As about a quarter of the city is today under water, after a rise in the levels of the Black Sea over the centuries, the project will involve several years of research.

The leader of the British team, Gocha Tsetskhladze, a Georgian-born scholar who lectures at Royal Holloway College, part of London University, said that, uniquely in the region, the site had survived without being built over. The remnants of temples, houses and bronze workshops in which the Greeks cast life-size statues have been located.

Political change in eastern Europe, he said, had opened up sites from which Western scholars were previously excluded. Archaeologists from



The British team at Phanagoria: only 1 per cent of the site has been excavated

Royal Holloway and King's College are working with Russian colleagues from the Institute of Archaeology at the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow.

Dr Tsetskhladze, who is appealing to sponsors for some £20,000 a year to continue the excavations, said: "The Black Sea has remained an area of myth, not just for the Ancient Greeks but for modern Western scholarship. The time has now come to open it to the West. Our knowledge of Greek colonisation of the Black Sea and the life lived by the Greeks there, far away from their homeland, is very sketchy."

Much of what is known about Phanagoria, which thrived until the 12th century AD, has been based on early references to it: the Greek geographer Strabo, who died in the 1st century AD, is among those who referred to it extensively.

"The Aegean Greeks' image of the Black Sea was of distant, dangerous shores with hostile inhabitants," Dr Tsetskhladze said. "The Ancient Greeks shrouded these far-off lands in myth. It was here that the Argonauts journeyed in search of the Golden Fleece."

Gold jewellery, found in the necropolis, includes exquisite necklaces and earrings. Some are in gold alone; others, according to Dr Tsetskhladze, are decorated with "practically any stone you can think of". A thousand graves which have been unearthed are full of jewels and pottery. They date from the 6th century BC to the 4th century AD. Skeletons of an "elite upper class" are to be analysed for evidence of their diet and health.

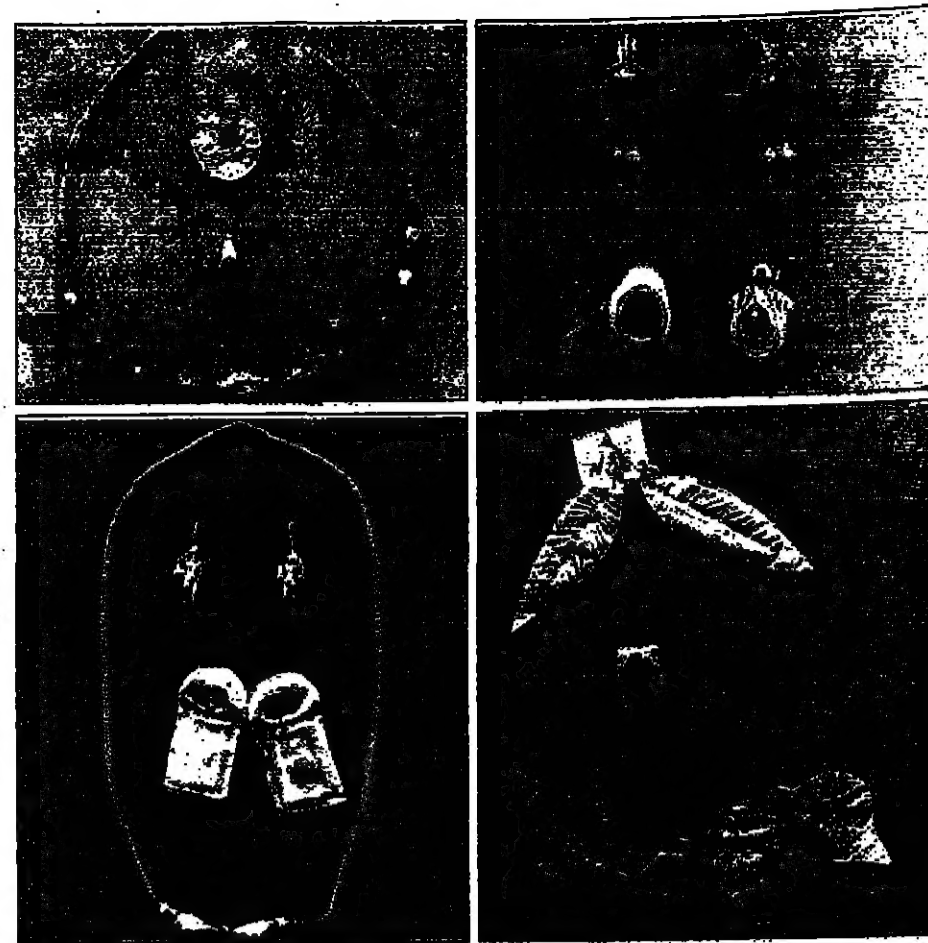
The geography and geology departments of Royal Holloway are also involved, studying ancient farming practices. Finding the head of Aphrodite has special significance as inscriptions found at Phana-

goria refer to an important temple dedicated to the goddess of love. Scholars have so far found 1,500 pieces of painted pottery. The gold coins, both local and Greco-Roman, might have been exchanged in the export to Athens of grain and other products.

Excavated antiquities are being shared between a local museum and Moscow, Dr Tsetskhladze said: "In Classical and Hellenistic times, Phanagoria had a very close relationship with mainland Greece, especially Athens. The study of the economic history of Phanagoria thus has the potential to offer insights into that of the wider Greek world."

Colonisation was an important feature of Greek history, with its people establishing themselves in the lands stretching from the Iberian peninsula in the west and Africa in the south to the Black Sea in the northeast. Dr Tsetskhladze said: "In this colonial world, Greek and local cultures met, shaped and enriched each other, resulting in the foundation of modern European culture."

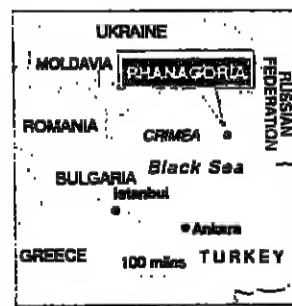
Phanagoria long competed for supremacy with Panticapaeum, the first capital of the Greco-Barbarian Bosphoran kingdom. "The consequences of this struggle have never been investigated in the archaeological record."



Jewellery uncovered in the necropolis, including necklaces and earrings, reveals exquisite workmanship; much is in gold and decorated with precious stones



Tsetskhladze: seeking sponsorship for dig



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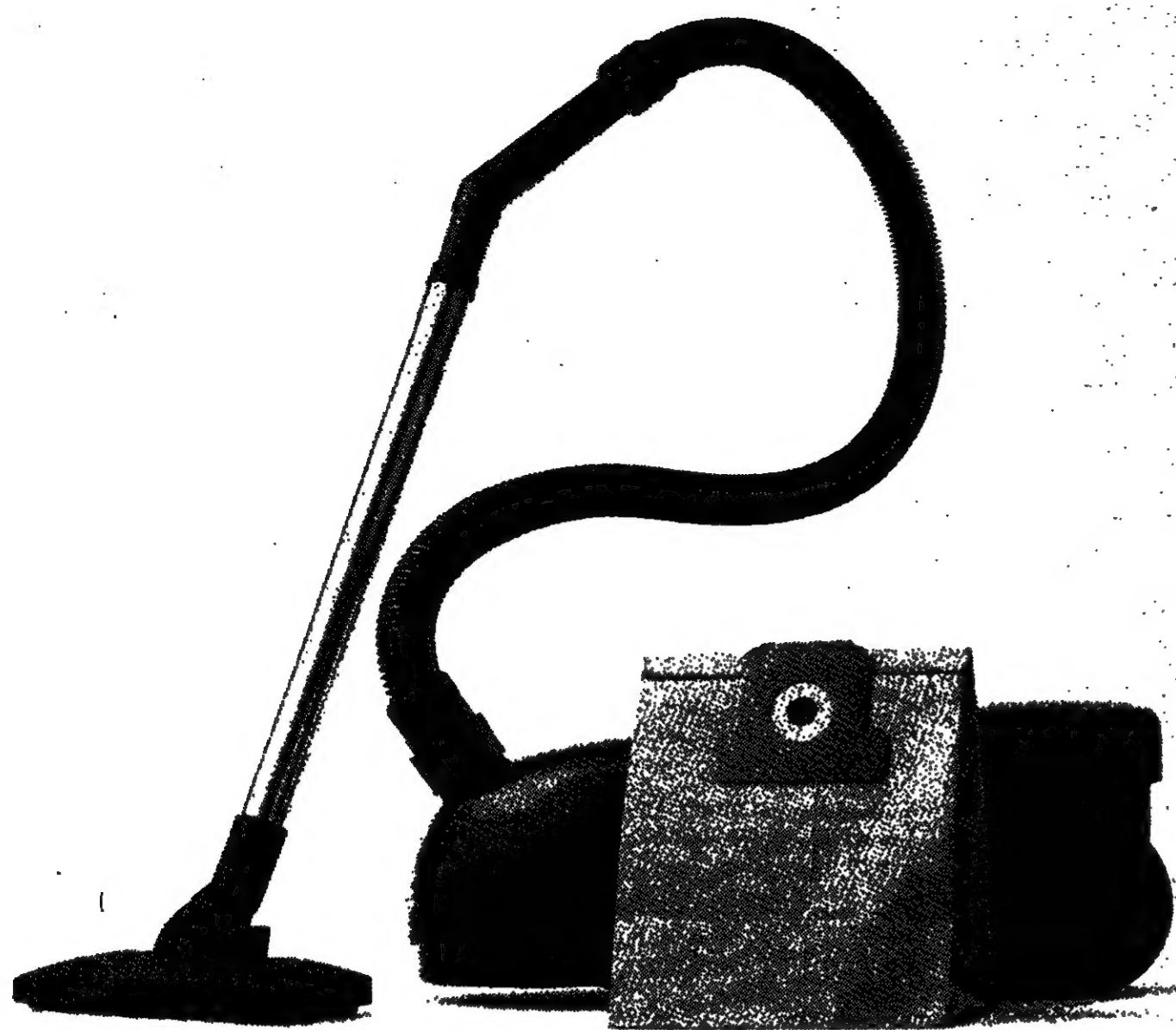
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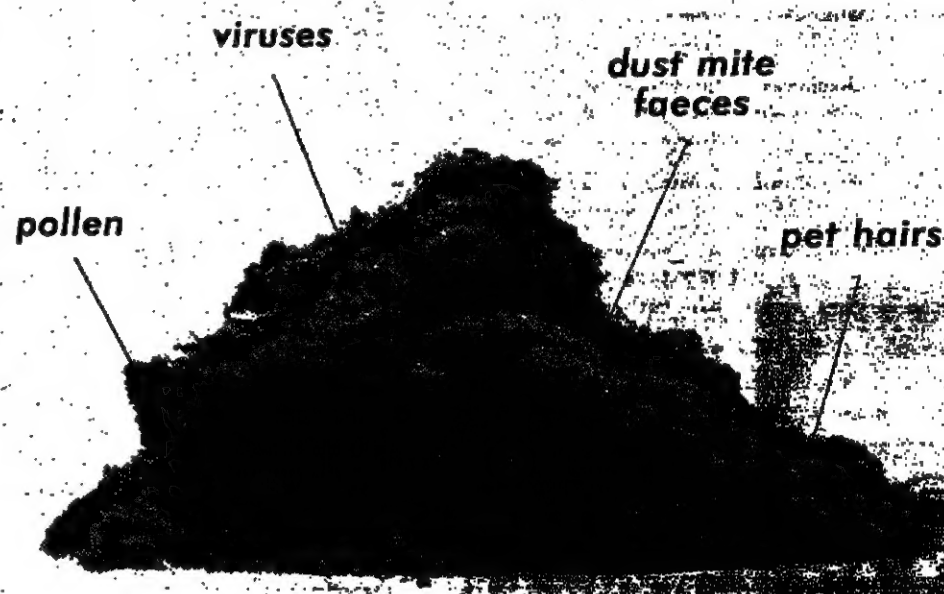
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US asks Vietnam for return of its mislaid plutonium

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

IN the final days of the Vietnam War, two American nuclear engineers volunteered for a perilous mission to the besieged city of Da Lat to recover a canister of plutonium, a key ingredient for making nuclear weapons.

Working feverishly for several days under sniper and mortar fire, the pair dismantled a nuclear research reactor. Then, leaving in a hurry, they scooped up 20lb of uranium and what they thought was the plutonium before being lifted out by helicopter hours before Da Lat fell in 1975.

Their derring-do was disclosed only yesterday by the American Government, but with the startling admission that the two engineers, in their scramble to escape, inadvertently seized the wrong canister. Instead of three ounces of plutonium, one hundredth of the amount needed for a bomb, they took a container of harmless polonium. Now America is asking the Communist Government of Vietnam for its plutonium back.

The nuclear gaffe was disclosed under a Clinton administration policy of openness. Dramatic films, previously secret, from the Cold War era of nuclear testing were released at the same time.

The films show unprotected American troops cowering in slit trenches about six miles from the centre of nuclear explosions and marching towards the site of a blast soon after it happened. The soldiers were used to determine if they could still function and with-

stand the psychological stress of a nuclear battlefield in the early 1950s when a Soviet nuclear attack on America was regarded as a distinct possibility.

It has been reported previously that as many as 250,000 US soldiers may have been exposed to radiation in Nevada and the Pacific without being told they were at risk. About 18,000 disability claims were filed with the Pentagon, but only 450 applicants have received benefits.

One spectacular film shows a nuclear missile blowing up in a huge ball of fire on the launch pad on Johnston Island in the Marshall Islands group. Scientists fled, and there were no casualties.

In making the disclosures, Hazel O'Leary, the US Energy Secretary, said that 13 more underground nuclear explosions than previously acknowledged pumped radiation into the atmosphere, though with no measurable contamination away from the test site. She also described US weaknesses at uranium storage sites that could result in the exposure of workers or the public to radiation. The conditions causing concern were at 13 sites in nine states. In many of the cases, corrective actions are under way.

Senior Energy Department officials learnt only recently that the plutonium in Da Lat never left Vietnam. A low-level report on the failure never reached them. Wally Hendrickson and John Horka, the two engineers,

were both commended for bravery. Mr Hendrickson said yesterday it was he who grabbed the wrong canister.

Now 62 and still doing nuclear clean-up work, he had no experience in covert operations before being smuggled into Da Lat, 180 miles north of Saigon. The pair were told they would be on their own if they were overrun.

The small reactor was given to South Vietnam in 1959 by President Eisenhower under an "Atoms for Peace" programme. As to the plutonium's whereabouts now, Mrs O'Leary said: "The discussion with respect to where it finally resides is not yet developed."

In other words, the Americans do not know. The State Department said Hanoi had been "responsive" to its inquiries. But some in Washington fear that the plutonium, small amount though it was, could have been sold to North Korea or Iran.



Relations of the victims of the 1995 Kobe earthquake in southern Japan light candles in a park at Itami, near Kobe, in memory of their loved ones. In all, 6,425 candles were lit yesterday — one for each victim — on the eve of the second anniversary of the disaster

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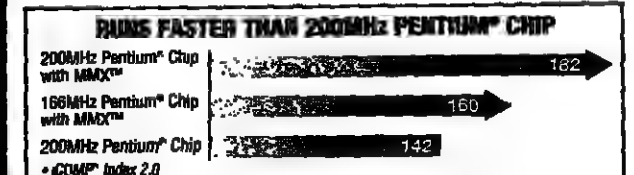
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Lebed capitalises on American invitation

FROM ROBIN LODGE IN MOSCOW

AMERICAN officials were last night attempting to explain how an invitation to attend President Clinton's inauguration had been sent, apparently without the knowledge of the White House, to Aleksandr Lebed, the Russian presidential hopeful and outspoken critic of the ailing President Yeltsin.

General Lebed, 46, who was dismissed last autumn as Mr Yeltsin's national security adviser and has since made no secret of his desire to take over as head of state, announced on Tuesday during a visit to Germany that he had accepted an invitation to attend the ceremony on Monday. Last

night the White House said it had not invited him but welcomed his presence as part of a further move towards a democratic Russia. Invitations to the event are controlled by the inaugural committee and by Congress.

The general's announcement was clearly aimed at improving the electorate's impression that his status as a leading Russian politician had received recognition in Washington. It also highlighted his energetic image in contrast to the bedridden Mr Yeltsin, who has spent the past two weeks back in hospital.

New sobriety, page 18

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS



Santer: majority rules

clubs of member states is turning into the main sticking point between Britain and its partners in the attempt to revamp the Maastricht treaty to prepare the EU for enlargement to the countries of the former Communist bloc. John Major this week proclaimed flexibility to be the solution to Britain's arguments over deeper integration and called it "the only way the EU is going to be able to develop".

The Government, as well as its EU partners, now hopes it can narrow down a compromise on a formula for a multispeed system to clear the way for a revamped Maastricht treaty. This is to be produced at a summit in

Warsaw sets money date

POLAND should be ready to exchange the zloty for the euro by 2006, according to a report by Grzegorz Kolodko, the Finance Minister (Roger Bows writes).

Poland's public deficit has been well under the 3 per cent ceiling for entry, set by the Maastricht treaty, since 1993. Public debt has been under the Maastricht target of 60 per cent since 1995 and is likely to fall further to 49.7 per cent in the coming year. Annual inflation, however, is about 18 per cent. Negotiations with the EU are scheduled to start this summer.

Senior British officials said yesterday that the main scope for multispeed arrangements stemmed from frontier and police co-operation and foreign policy, but a majority of member states retained misgivings over the plans to allow groups of countries to use the community institutions that administer the economic area.

A flexible system already operates in practice with the continental Schengen scheme for open frontiers, Britain's opt-out from the Social Chapter and Britain and Denmark's right to stay out of monetary union if they wish. Compromise between Britain and its partners appeared most likely in the field of immigration and police work, the officials said. Most other states back plans for centralising border control and Britain would simply seek to opt out of the arrangement.

The Commission has long been reluctant to concede the need for formalising flexibility for fear of encouraging a "mix 'n' match" approach that could undermine the drive to ever closer union. It has now accepted the approach as inevitable, given the differences among member states in an enlarging union, and is trying to shape the debate.

Under its approach, groups of member states would have to apply to the Commission to vet their plan to ensure that it did not breach existing rules and rights. The Commission and other community institutions, including the Court of Justice, could administer the more integrated actions, but the participating countries would have to bear the costs. The Government is unhappy with the idea of putting EU machinery, and especially the Court of Justice, at the disposal of inner circles.

President Chirac is welcomed by President Gorbach of Hungary and children in Budapest at the start of a two-day state visit by the French leader.

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

JACQUES DELORS, bogey man of British Eurosceptics, was yesterday tipped in the German press to be the first president of the European central bank.

The claim, in the usually well-informed *Wirtschaftswoche* magazine, is being denied, not least by M. Delors himself. But there was no doubt in Bonn that M. Delors would be an ideal candidate for his long-time friend Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor. Indeed some believe the information was leaked from Herr Kohl's office, which is staffed by several francophile advisers.

The floating of M Delors' name highlights the dispute between France and Germany over the image and strategy of the future European bank: whether it should be run by technocrats or political placemen. M Delors may well decline the offer if it ever comes — he is 71 and plagued by sciatica — but it will be instructive to see who supports him, for he is the very model of a political banker.

His appointment would infuriate the Bundesbank and the smaller members of European monetary union who will be looking for a firmly independent central bank.

Thatcher during his tenure as President of the European Commission, for he showed himself to be a politically adept bureaucratic centraliser — the qualities most loathed by the former British Prime Minister. His training is that of a central banker, having entered the Banque de France at the age of 19.

The Delors rumour sows further confusion in the bubbling dispute



Delors: favoured by Kohl

between Paris and Bonn about the role of the central bank which is due to replace the European Monetary Institute. Paul Marchelli, of France's central bank council, said this week that a secret deal was struck between Paris and Bonn at the time that the European bank was sited in Frankfurt. According to M Marchelli, in an interview with the French magazine *Investir*, Germany agreed to the first head of the European bank being a Frenchman. Now, he suggested, Bonn was renegeing on the deal.

The Germans enthusiastically backed the head of the Dutch central bank, Wim Duisenberg, to succeed their present institute chief, Alexander Lamfalussy. In Germany, especially in the Bundesbank, the German-speaking Dutchman is seen as somebody who will not allow the European banks to be swayed by politics. It has been assumed that Mr Duisenberg, who takes over in July, will automatically become the central bank chief in 1999.

The French are questioning the idea.

Mr Lamfalussy said last week that the European bank would not be a carbon copy of the Bundesbank but German ministers insist that, if anything, it will be more independent and more determined in pursuit of a hard

currency. By contrast, the French believe that the future European bank should be responsive to democratically elected politicians. The radically different view about the function of a central bank continues to poison Franco-German relations.

Personal politics is also helping to determine the arguments. Since President Chirac of France is unhappy with liberal Dutch drug policies, he is reluctant to reward The Netherlands by approving the appointment of a Dutch banker. The Germans in turn have been reluctant to consider a French alternative, not only because of the risk of political manipulation — and a sapping of popular German trust in the euro — but also because of a sense it is losing many arguments to the French.

Typical of the mood in Bonn is an article yesterday, by Professor Werner Kahlfeiler, an influential political scientist at Kiel University. He said Germans would surrender the mark more readily if other countries such as France and Britain "Europeanised" their nuclear weapons. "A single currency alone is not enough to give united Europe international importance. European nuclear weapons are necessary for this."

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Vichy chief makes last bid to avoid Holocaust trial

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

MAURICE PAPON, the ageing Vichy official accused of deporting 1,690 Jews to Nazi death camps during the Second World War, launched a last-ditch legal appeal yesterday to avoid standing trial for crimes against humanity.

The Court of Cassation, France's supreme court, began closed-door hearings to decide whether the ailing 87-year-old bureaucrat and former cabinet minister should stand trial in Bordeaux, the city where M Papon served as regional secretary-general under the collaborationist Vichy Government.

M Papon is the first senior Vichy official to face charges of collusion in the Nazi "final solution" and his case is seen as the last opportunity for France to address the painful ghosts of Vichy.

"No French civil servant could have known about the final solution," Jacques Bore, one of M Papon's lawyers, told the court, adding that prosecutors were trying to "rewrite history 50 years later". The

Court of Cassation is expected to rule next Thursday.

After 14 years of legal wrangling by the families of French Holocaust victims, during which the case was delayed repeatedly for political reasons, an appeal court ruled last September that M Papon should be tried for crimes against humanity. That court also accepted allegations that M Papon was an accomplice in the kidnapping and murder of Jewish deportees, most of whom perished in Auschwitz. He also faces charges of arbitrary arrest, the arrest of minors and "inhuman acts".

If the appeal court decision is not upheld next week, the judicial system will face renewed allegations that a full examination of Vichy's wartime role has been covered up.

M Papon, who recently underwent triple bypass surgery, had been expected to attend yesterday's hearing but failed to appear, raising concerns that his health may be too precarious for a trial. Prosecutors allege that M Papon, who

enjoyed a meteoric postwar career, must have known he was sending Jews to almost certain death.

But his lawyers argue that he was "only obeying orders", that Vichy was not a criminal regime. They also say, perhaps most crucially, that far from being a Nazi tool he was an active member of the Resistance who sought to alleviate the suffering of deported Jews.

M Papon says that he joined the Resistance in 1943 and, although his claims have been disputed by some former Resistance fighters, they have been supported by others. The two images of M Papon reflect two, starkly different versions of the Vichy years: a Government working in the longer-term interests of France or a cynical group of criminals colluding in genocide.

"Respect for the victims' memory demands that Maurice Papon answer at last for the assistance given to crimes against humanity," Jean-Pierre Dittlich, a prosecutor, told the court yesterday.



Papon, who is accused of deporting 1,690 Jews to Nazi extermination camps

German jailed over mail-order bride business

BY ROGER BOYES

PHILIPPINE authorities, as part of a crackdown on sex tourism, yesterday jailed a German for running a mail-order bride business which put Europeans in touch with young women in the Philippines.

Bernhard Lauks, 48, from Geseke in north Germany, was sentenced to seven years in prison. A court in Bacolod was told that Lauks ran an illegal business recruiting women from poor areas in the islands of Negros and Cebu.

Perhaps the point has been reached when Philippine women have to trade their morals for a bowl of rice," said Judge Edgardo de los Reyes. "This is evident from the frequent sex tours and the influx of paedophiles in our country."

Postal marriage bureaux sometimes occupy a legal grey area in Asia. The Philippine authorities have outlawed such agencies, concerned that they can be used as a cover for paedophile networks or by sex tourists.

Some of the main destinations for sex tourism — the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand — have been cracking down recently on Western tourists, local gangs and corrupt officials. Germany, Sweden and Australia have introduced legislation to prosecute paedophiles after they return home. Britain has been considering similar moves.

The calculation is that the offenders will be embarrassed by being tried at home and that this will be an additional deterrent. Such cases have been hard to try because of the difficulty of gathering evidence.

A team of British detectives is flying to Manila at the

weekend to improve intelligence links with Filipino authorities and clear up some of the problems in gathering credible evidence. The delegation, drawn from the National Criminal Intelligence Service and the British branch of Interpol, will concentrate on ways of rounding up paedophile networks.

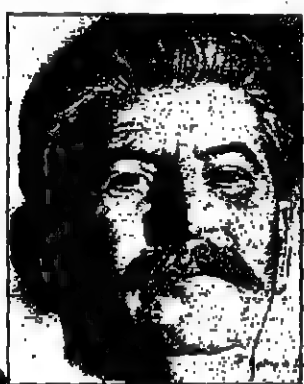
The Christian Aid charity says that most foreigners arrested for child sex crimes in the Philippines are British. Last year two Britons and an Australian were convicted of paedophilia and sentenced to up to 17 years in jail.

The Germans are also a prime target for the Filipino police: annually, about 400,000 Germans fly to Third World destinations for sex. The result of this influx has been a rapid increase in child prostitution. In the Philippines there are said to be between 40,000 and 60,000 — two thirds of them boys. In Thailand, officials say the number is about 100,000.

Last summer a 63-year-old German was arrested for sexually molesting Filipino boys in a gymnasium he had built north of Manila. German travel companies are now actively co-operating with European and Asian governments in apprehending sex tourists. Suggestive advertisements and phrasing have been removed from travel brochures, and hotel owners have been warned not to tolerate paedophiles. □ Manila: A privately funded Japanese women's group has signed an agreement with the Philippines to provide expanded humanitarian assistance to Filipinos used as "sex slaves" during the Second World War. (Reuters)

Skeletons revive horrors of Stalin's purges

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW



Stalin: hero in Georgia

THE chilling legacy of Stalin's purges in his own homeland have been renewed in Georgia after workers discovered three human skeletons in the grounds of the Security Ministry in central Tbilisi.

According to a ministry spokesman, the remains were found during renovation work and taken away for examination. "It is impossible to say

when they were buried here, but the speculation is that it happened in the 1930s during the repressions," the spokesman said.

Some reports suggested that the victims had been buried alive, and may be connected to other human remains discovered four years ago in the grounds of the Georgian parliament building near by. Arseni Roginsky, the head of Memorial, the organisation committed to remembering the estimated 20 million Soviet citizens who

perished under Stalin, said that the latest discoveries may have been among the tens of thousands of Georgians who were killed in the great purges.

Although Stalin, who was born Joseph Dzhugashvili, and his henchman, Lavrenti Beria, were both Georgians, this did not prevent them rounding up and murdering their fellow countrymen, often intellectuals and members of the Communist Party they knew personally.

"In terms of numbers, Georgia suffered the same as everywhere else in the Soviet Union, except that in Georgia the murders were less rampant," Mr Roginsky said.

One particularly gruesome statistic is provided by the Communist Party congress of 1937. Of the 644 Georgian delegates who took part, 425 disappeared in the following months. In spite of the memories provoked by this week's findings, many Georgians still regard Stalin as a hero.

Rome wins vote on federal reform to block separatists

BY RICHARD OWEN

THE Italian Senate approved a new constitutional body yesterday which could give Italy a federal structure along German lines and a directly elected Prime Minister.

Professor Romano Prodi, the centre-left Prime Minister, elected last April, said the aim was to provide greater stability by revising the postwar constitution to suit modern conditions.

The new bicameral commission will debate fundamental revisions to the constitution, adopted in January 1948 after the end of Fascism. The move towards a federal structure, with greater self-government for the regions, is intended to

undercut the separatist Northern League, led by the fiery Umberto Bossi. Although his attempt to declare a separate state of "Padania" in Venice last September gathered little support, leaders of the Left and the Right fear that the regional grievances he exploited remain powerful.

The agreement to set up the commission comes after lengthy negotiations between Silvio Berlusconi, leader of the Centre Right, and Massimo D'Alema, head of the Party of the Democratic Left, the former Communists. The main obstacles have not been between Left and Right but between Signor Berlusconi

and his main partner on the Centre Right, Gianfranco Fini, leader of the "post-Fascist" Alleanza Nazionale. Signor Fini had wanted Italy to move towards a powerful French-style presidency, but many Italians remain suspicious of such proposals because of the misuse of centralised power by Mussolini, the Fascist dictator.

The Senate majority was larger than expected, with 236 in favour and only 16 against. The proposal still has to pass the lower house next week. The commission will have 70 members drawn from both chambers of Parliament, and will report at the end of June.

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Memos back top French link to KGB

Paris: A French magazine yesterday published documents from the KGB and Bulgarian secret service to back its claim that the late Charles Hernu, France's Foreign Minister in the 1980s, was a Communist spy in the 1950s and 1960s (Ben Macintyre writes). One of the memos in L'Express describes relations between "agent Hernu" and his Bulgarian "controller".

Father confesses

Hooftorp: The father of three children found dead at home admitted that he and his wife killed them, Dutch police said. They were arrested on Wednesday but were recovering from stab wounds. (AP)

Tests for Tutu

Cape Town: Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the South African Nobel peace laureate, was admitted to hospital for prostate gland treatment, an associate said. Samples were taken for tests. (Reuters)

Siege progress

Lima: Left-wing rebels holding 74 hostages at the Japanese Ambassador's residence have agreed to the creation of a negotiating panel, and hinted for the first time they might be willing to leave Peru. (AFP)

Sherry man dies

London: José Ignacio Doméq González, 82, known as El Nariz (The Nose) for his skill as a connoisseur of sherry, has died in Jerez, southern Spain, the Allied Doméq drinks group said. (Reuters)

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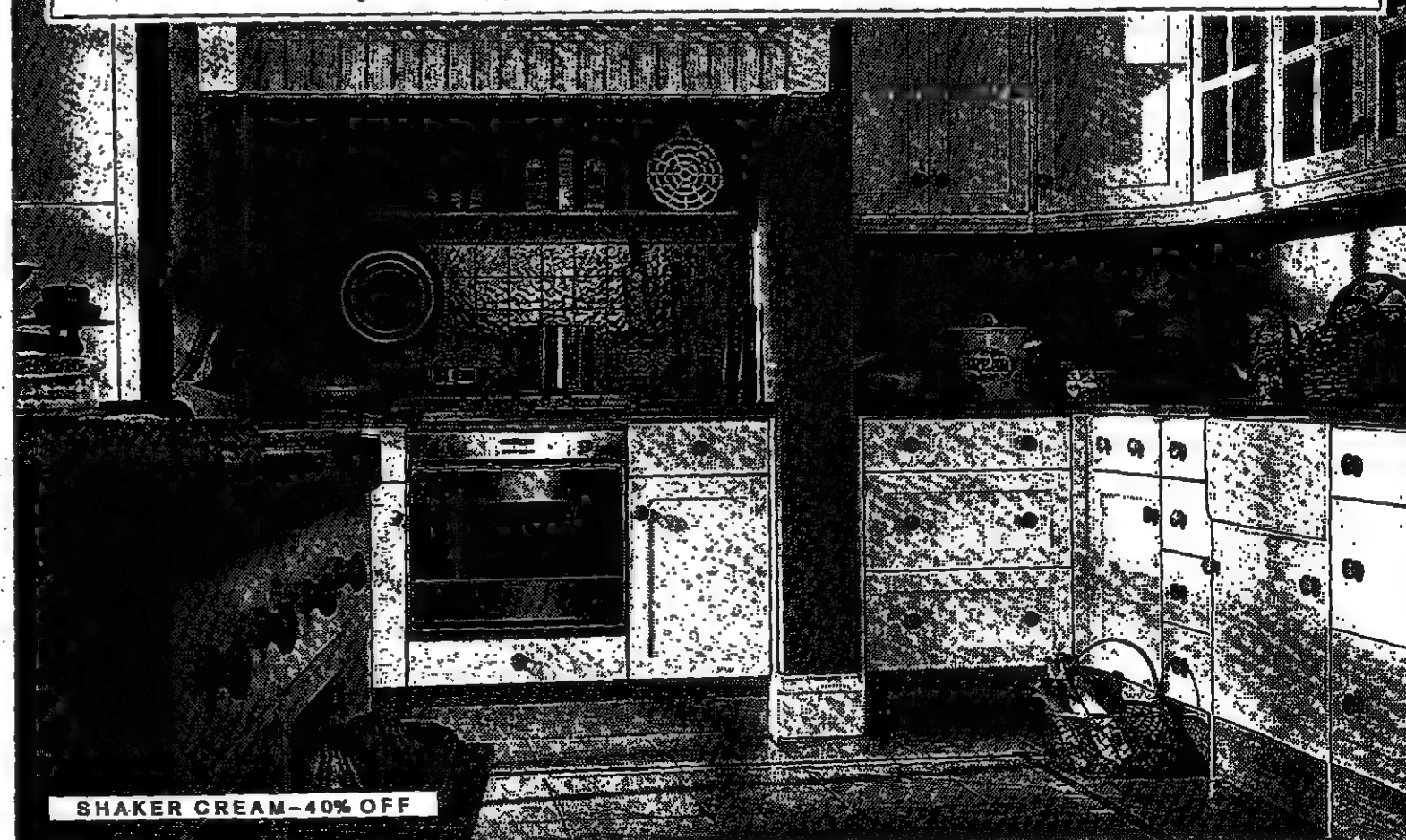
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Uday: "paralysed"

Saddam celebrates 'victory'

By MICHAEL THEODOULOU
IN NICOSIA

IRAQ will today kick off a month-long "victory" party marking the start anniversary of the Gulf War. President Saddam Hussein will deliver a belated speech typical of his performances during the conflict that left his country defeated, impoverished and isolated.

Diplomats say the fanfare is aimed at deflecting attention from the fact that his power base is eroding rapidly.

Iraqis will be watching to see whether Uday, Saddam's eldest son and one-time heir apparent, who was seriously wounded in an assassination attempt more than a month ago, is at his side. This is unlikely to be so. The playboy was reported this week to be still in hospital and paralysed from the waist down.

State-run television has shown images of Uday, 33, joking about his bullet wounds as "badges of honour", but he has not been shown standing.

Saddam is now said to be grooming Qusay, 31, his more sober son, to succeed him. Most Iraqis view this move with equal alarm. "Uday is a psychopath, but Qusay is a sadist," an Iraqi exile said.

The objective of the defiant "victory" party is to demonstrate that Saddam's grip on power is as tight as ever. Iraqis have been ordered to express their hatred of the "cowardly" West.

Letters, page 19

Israeli soldiers told to pull out 'with heads held high and in broad daylight'

Star of David flag comes down at Hebron army base

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER
IN JERUSALEM

WITHDRAWAL

ISRAEL'S Star of David flag was lowered at an army checkpoint guarding the entrance to Hebron yesterday and dozens of lorries were loaded with heavy equipment as Israel prepared to end 30 years of military rule over most of the West Bank city.

Army commanders were poised to give the go-ahead for the pullout to begin in earnest after a heated debate in the 120-seat Knesset to approve the deal completed in the early hours of Wednesday by Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, and Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader.

Yitzhak Mordechai, the Defence Minister, a strong backer of the decision to withdraw from 80 per cent of the city holy to both Jews and Muslims, issued orders to the army not to begin the evacuation until the Knesset gave its authorisation. However, after the narrow 11-7 vote of approval in the Cabinet, Mr Mordechai sanctioned the immediate removal of heavy equipment to speed up the operation and minimise chances of violence by extreme right-wing Jews and Islamic militants, who are both firmly opposed to the agreement.

Because opposition left-wing parties had pledged to support the long-delayed pullback, originally scheduled for March 1996, Israel radio said that the controversial deal was assured of support in parliament. It was also being debated in the Palestinian legislature in Ramallah, where angry representatives claimed that they had not been given copies of the agreement.

After the humiliation of Israel's late-night flight from Nablus, the largest West Bank city, which was a severe blow to army morale, Mr Mordechai issued special orders that the retreat from Hebron — the last West Bank city still under Israeli control — must be carried out "with heads held high and in broad daylight".

Hebron's 450 Jews, surrounded by 20,000 Palestinians, will stay on in the city under heavy guard.

In rain and fog that kept onlookers to a minimum, army bulldozers dismantled cement barriers at the gate of the main military headquarters on a hill above the city. Palestinians living near the headquarters were euphoric as they watched the soldiers preparing a pullout that Washington hopes will give a boost to the flagging peace process.

"It is one of the happiest days of my life," said Maher Dandi, a 25-year-old baker watching from his home in a city with a total Arab population of 120,000. "I never dreamt the army would leave here."

Also dismantled, as the marathon Knesset debate continued, were checkpoints and an observation post in different parts of the city.

Although many right-wing

more contentious issues than that of Hebron. "These are the real hard nuts that were left until last by the Oslo agreement," one diplomat said. "They will make negotiating Hebron look very small beer."

The final status talks opened briefly just before the defeat of the previous Labour administration, but were ad-

Journal before proper work could begin and were overtaken by the May election that swept Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing Government to power. No attempt has been made so far to resume them.

The talks, planned to be completed in 1999, will tackle the question of future Palestinian sovereignty. The most contentious of the issues, which many observers fear will prove intractable, is the future of Jerusalem. With both sides claiming the holy city as their capital, the subject arouses emotions much more fundamental than those involved over Hebron, which four fifths of Israelis said in a poll yesterday they had not visited in the past five years.

"If there is no good faith, no proof that [the Palestinians] are complying with signed agreements, then I cannot see how we will be able to make progress on such drastic issues," said Eliahu Ben-Eliassir, the Israeli Ambassador to Washington. In addition to Jerusalem, the new talks will also cover the final borders of what Palestinians hope will be their state as well as the future of millions of Palestinian refugees.

The Netanyahu Government has made known its opposition to any notion of a "right of return" for the Palestinians abroad. So vexed are the questions due for discussion that many Israelis believe that no final agreement can be reached without the installation of a government of national unity involving both Likud and Labour. Already, to the anger of some on the extreme Right disillusioned by what they see as the Hebron "surrender", two deputies from the opposing camps, Michael Elon, leader of the Likud Knesset group, and Yossi Beilin, a Labour leadership contender, have been discussing a mutually acceptable final status plan.

Parallel with the revived final status talks, a tussle between Israel and the Palestinians looks likely over the amount of West Bank land that Israel will vacate in the three further redeployments agreed this week, to be completed by the middle of next year. Israel says that the new pullbacks will leave it with 50 per cent of the West Bank; the Palestinians say that the figure should be 15 per cent.

Western diplomats said that Mr Netanyahu's reluctantly given agreement on Hebron was born more of American and, to a lesser extent, Arab and other international pressure than of any heartfelt commitment to the 1993 Palestinian self-rule deal.

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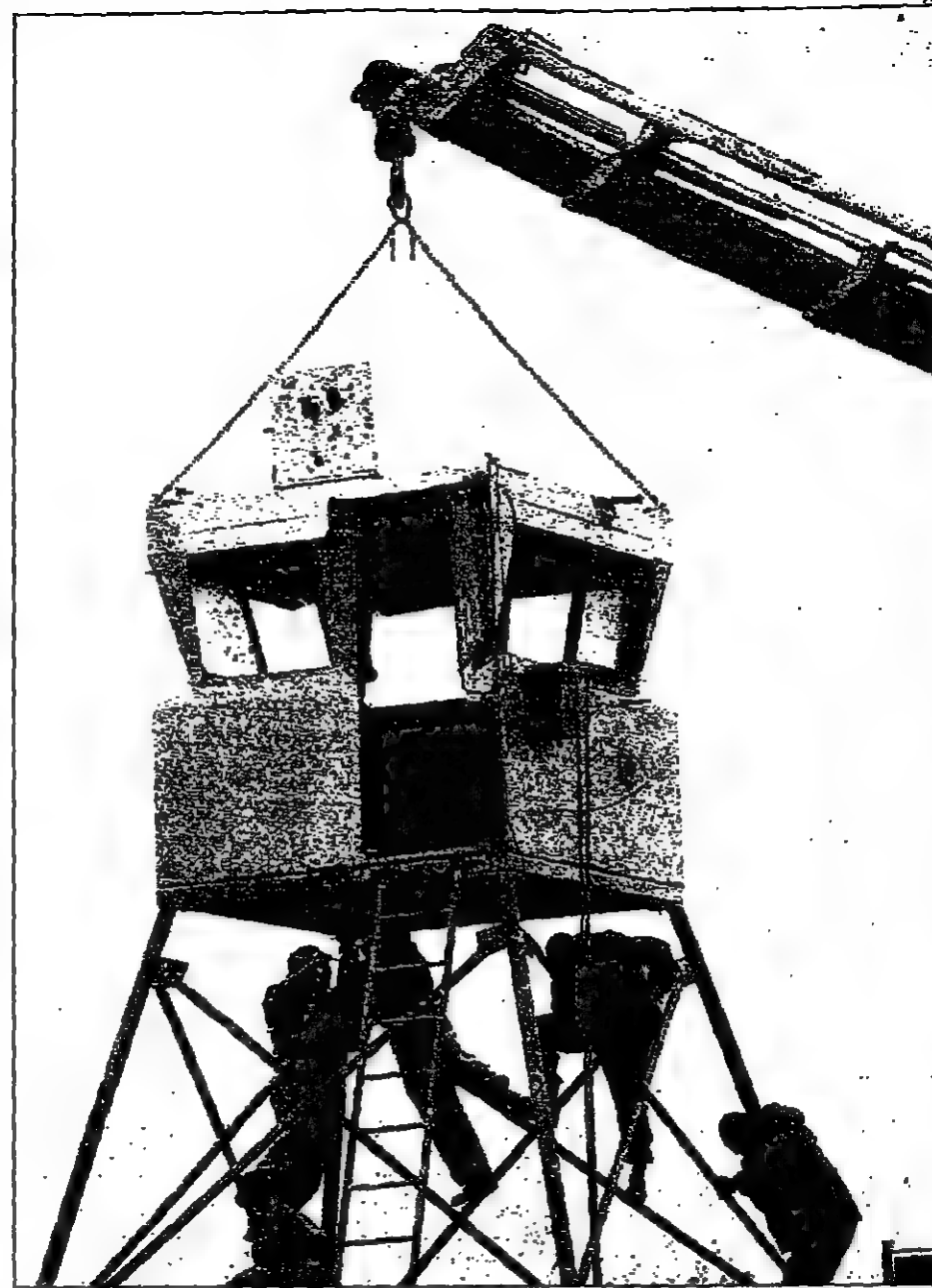
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Israeli soldiers dismantle a watch tower at the army headquarters in Hebron yesterday after the agreement to withdraw from four fifths of the disputed city

dier-General Abdel-Fattah al-Jaidi, the Palestinians' Hebron commander, said.

The Knesset debate was opened by Mr Netanyahu, who was frequently heckled as

he attempted to reassure angry rightwingers that Israel was not leaving Hebron, merely redeploying its forces. He received more support from opposition deputies than

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Tactical shift fails to solve enigma

By CHRISTOPHER WALKER

"YOU promised. We believed. You betrayed," read the sign held yesterday by one of the right-wing Israelis maintaining a protest vigil outside the office of Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, after he concluded the tortuous deal with the Palestinian Authority to hand over most of Hebron.

Although many right-wing Jewish extremists see Mr Netanyahu as a "traitor" who has sold out his ideals, most political analysts see him more as a continuing enigma.

REACTION

"Netanyahu has been in office for seven months, but there has yet to be any progress in deciphering the enigma of his true personality," Hemi Shalev, a leading Israeli columnist, wrote.

While the increasingly isolated settler movement argued that the Hebron deal reflected the final abandonment by Mr Netanyahu of the revisionist ideology of Zionism for which his family was famous, most commentators concluded that the long-delayed decision to sanction the Hebron pullout was mainly a tactical response to political pressure.

"It is significant that the Likud would sign an agreement to evacuate the city they view as their ancestral hometown," said Khalil al-Shikaki, director of the West Bank-based Centre for Palestine Research and Studies. "But this does not necessarily indicate giving up a long-held ideological stance. It may only reflect political pragmatism on his part."

Gerald Steinberg, a political science professor at Tel Aviv's Bar Ilan University, agreed. "It is clearly a pragmatic step," he concluded. "He is responding to the lack of an alternative."

Unlike the Sinai, handed back to Egypt under the 1979 Camp David treaty by Menachem Begin (whose son, Benny, resigned from the Cabinet over the Hebron accord), Hebron and the rest of the West Bank of the River Jordan are viewed by right-wing Israelis as "Judea and Samaria," and thus theirs by God-given right.

Western diplomats said that Mr Netanyahu's reluctantly given agreement on Hebron was born more of American and, to a lesser extent, Arab and other international pressure than of any heartfelt commitment to the 1993 Palestinian self-rule deal.

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THE TIMES FRIDAY JANUARY 17 1997

Algers troops in casbah gun battle with guerrillas

By Ben Macintyre

A FRESH wave of bloodshed swept Algiers yesterday as security forces fought running gunbattles with Muslim guerrillas in the streets of the casbah and a powerful bomb exploded in a crowded market south of the capital, killing 12 people and injuring at least 100.

More than 300 people have been killed in Algeria's spiralling violence over the past two months, bringing the death toll to an estimated 60,000 since 1992 when the military cancelled elections which the Islamists were certain to win. Government security forces, reinforced by elite Algerian troops, sealed off the high casbah on Wednesday night and exchanged fire for seven hours with 12 heavily armed extremist rebels holed up in the ancient heart of the city.

The casbah, overlooking the Mediterranean, was a focal point of resistance to French forces during Algeria's war of independence, and the Muslim extremists seeking to overthrow the Algerian Govern-

ment have recently signalled their presence in the area with a series of brutal murders. Security forces have conducted several sweeps of the district in the course of the five-year conflict, often using heavy weaponry and seldom taking prisoners.

At least 12 people were killed yesterday in the town of Boufarik, 20 miles south of Algiers, when a bomb exploded in the popular morning car market. The attack came just a week after simultaneous car bombs killed 20 people and injured more than 100 in Algiers and the town of Ain-Fakroun, 240 miles east of the capital.

Despite the Government's claims to be winning the bitter conflict, violence has steadily escalated in recent weeks with a series of bombings and attacks on villages by guerrillas. Earlier this week, the bodies of five girls were found with their throats cut in a village near Algiers.

The bombing in Boufarik, a known centre of Islamic mili-

tancy, came hours after President Zeroual insisted: "The Algerian nation is staunchly committed to fight terrorism carried out by criminals, traitors and mercenaries."

The army's raid on the casbah on Wednesday night came after the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the most militant of the Islamic groups fighting to topple the military-backed regime, distributed leaflets threatening to kill women wearing Western-style clothes and forbidding men from smoking.

An Arabic-language newspaper *al-Moudjah*, suspected of pro-Islamic leanings, was seized from printing presses by the authorities yesterday in the latest crackdown on the media.

The confiscated edition carried a story alleging that the Damascus home-in-exile of Emir Abdelkader, the late and revered Algerian leader, had been turned into a nightclub in the last three years. *al-Moudjah* has been banned three times.

New light on Britons killed in Indonesia

From Roger Maynard in Sydney

THE secrecy surrounding the fate of two British journalists murdered when Indonesia invaded East Timor in the 1970s was partly lifted yesterday with release of a hitherto unpublished photograph of their funeral.

The photograph reveals that the service for five murdered journalists, including the two Britons, was attended by a British diplomat, despite the fact that the Foreign Office for years refused to give information about their deaths or disclose details to their relations in Britain.

The picture shows mourners with a single coffin containing the remains of the five reporters, including the Britons Malcolm Rennie, 28, and Brian Peters, 29, who were working for Australia's Channel Nine network in the border town of Balibo when they were killed by Indonesian forces.

The photograph, taken during a simple religious service at a graveyard in Jakarta, was kept from relations until recently. Although a copy of the picture was given in 1995 by



The released photograph of the coffin allegedly containing the remains of five journalists at a Jakarta graveyard

the Foreign Office to Maureen Tolfree, Peters's sister, other relations knew nothing about its existence until this month.

Last night Shirley Shackleton, a widow of one of the Australian newsmen, said that the photograph proved there was a degree of collu-

sion by the Australian authorities. "It makes me angry to think that these men, who think they are given a mandate to rule the Australian people, were colluding with the Indonesian authorities to keep this whole thing silent," she said.

Mrs Shackleton said she

did not believe that the coffin contained the journalists' remains, which were never returned to Australia. "I was sent a telegram by a doctor who was given the so-called remains to identify and he said 'the most I can say is they're human,'" she recalled. She wants a judicial inquiry

into the killings. "I don't think conspiracy is too big a charge to make," she added. Indonesia says that the five were killed in crossfire between East Timorese factions. But an Australian investigation last year concluded that probably they were killed by Indonesian forces.



Africa's ex-rebels go back to war against new foes

From Sam Kiley, Africa Correspondent, in Nairobi

THE leaders of four African countries have launched a cross-border military purge of their enemies. The co-ordinated effort could undermine French influence in East and Central Africa and confirm fears in Paris of an "anglophone conspiracy" in the region.

President Museveni of Uganda, who arrived in London for a private conference last night, is at the centre of the initiative, which is based on friendships between African guerrillas-turned-politicians, forged in conflict and in student digs in the 1970s.

Others in the informal alliance include Paul Kagame, Rwanda's Vice-President and Minister of Defence, who—as a Tutsi refugee in Uganda—was head of Mr Museveni's military intelligence until 1990. The two men are close friends with two other tough former guerrilla leaders, Presidents Aferwerki of Eritrea and Zewawi of Ethiopia.

All four brought down dictatorships which had the backing of better-armed and bigger armies in the 1980s and 1990s. With the enthusiastic backing of the United States and the quiet approval of Britain, they are now retaliating against neighbouring states which have been harbouring rebel groups opposed to them—groups taking their cue from Washington's frequent demand that "Africans find solutions to

Africa's problems". They are doing so, by, in turn, assisting rebels against the governments of those countries.

This week the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), led by John Garang, a long-time colleague of Mr Museveni and Major-General Kagame, has won remarkable victories against Khartoum's army on the borders with Eritrea and Ethiopia. Both countries have denied any involvement with the SPLA, but Eritrean and Ethiopian officers have been seen commanding SPLA soldiers.

An African diplomat in Nairobi said: "There is no way that the SPLA are not being supported by the Eritreans and the Ethiopians. Their help could turn around the civil war in Sudan."

It could also hasten the demise of Khartoum's Islamic regime, which has backed fundamentalist groups in Somalia, Eritrea and Ethiopia, and a Christian fundamentalist group which is hoping to overthrow the Ugandan Government. Sudan is on the US list of states sponsoring terrorism.

Late last year, Uganda and Rwanda also backed an uprising by rebels in eastern Zaire who are aiming to drive the Zairean Army from the region and bring down President Mobutu. The aim of the Ugandan and Rwandan leaders was to destroy the Hutu militia which was using Zaire as a base for operations in Rwanda, as well as several Ugandan rebel groups based in the northeast of Zaire.

Uganda and Rwanda have denied any part in supporting the uprising. On the front line, however, soldiers freely admit that they were trained in the Rwandan Army. Some even spoke only Ugandan languages, such as Acholi.

This complex web of overlapping civil wars has resulted in a spread of the English language in Zaire, traditional language in Zaire, traditional language in Zaire. President Mobutu is now recruiting a "white legion" of mercenaries to take back land which he lost to the Ugandan and Rwandan-backed rebels.

Since French soldiers were forced to surrender Fashoda to the British under Lord Kitchener in 1898, the army and hardline elements in the Elysée Palace have been obsessed with the spread of Anglo-Saxon influence in Central Africa. Recent events have reinforced their conspiracy theories.



Museveni: at centre of ex-guerrilla alliance



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'I thought the divorce law was good, but we got it as wrong as could possibly be'



Ruth Deech, Chairman of Admissions at Oxford and principal of St Anne's, thrives on committees: "I am blessed with a fairly loud voice and a thick skin"

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Ruth Deech has been at the coalface of legal reform since the Sixties. Today she chairs the authority on human fertilisation and embryology.

Ruth Deech came home from cruising in the Indian Ocean last Sunday to find herself in the eye of several storms. "I always seem," said Mrs Deech, "to be in these no-win situations."

We met as she left the Appeal Court on Wednesday. The judges have yet to decide whether Diane Blood may have her late husband's baby. Mrs Deech, chairman of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, can say nothing about this. But as Chairman of Admissions at Oxford, she can refute Simon Jenkins's argument in *The Times* that Oxford should be less meritocratic, taking a gamble on eccentrics.

"If Oxford was NOT meritocratic, I can just imagine what he would say. There are so many bright kids with three As, one can choose the brightest and also find among them the debaters, the sportsmen, the eccentrics, the drunks. But we cannot start by looking for people with family and college connections. That is quite unacceptable."

Yet as Ruth Fraenkel, she got herself into Oxford eccentricity with only one top-grade A level (French); her Latin was average and she failed history. But she was determined. She tried every Oxbridge college until Lady Ogilvie, principal of St Anne's, "took a chance on her". And Lady O was right. Miss Fraenkel achieved her first (in law) and has become a power in the land as well as principal of St Anne's herself.

She was the only child of refugee parents in Clapham. Her father was a Viennese journalist (he studied law but could not practise under Hitler) who arrived in London the day war was declared.

At ten, she passed the 11-plus so impressively that the local authority sent her to Christ's Hospital School, Hertford. "I'd read Angela Brazil and imagined fun in the dorm. But it wasn't like that. They stripped you naked and clothed you in jisle stockings, baggy navy gymslips, calico underwear, starched night-dresses. I was miserable." As the only Jewish girl in a church school, she objected to bacon for breakfast, and her parents nearly took her away. "But I wouldn't admit defeat. I was a battling, determined child even then."

Thirty years on she realises her school made her resilient, disciplined and efficient.

Having accompanied her husband, whom she met on her first night in Oxford, to teach in Canada, she came home to see a *Times* advert for a St Anne's fellowship, and has been there ever since, influencing the law from outside the courtroom. Her 1994 polemic on *Dangers in Divorce Reform* warned against the most recent changes. Yet back in 1969 Mrs Deech had been at the coalface of divorce reform.

"I was only a lowly assistant at the Law Commission at a most exciting time. And I thought it was a very good law, rectifying previous defects. But as the years passed, I realised that the underlying sociology was hopelessly wrong."

"They thought illegitimacy would fall, divorce would stabilise and become less hostile. Instead illegitimacy rose, cohabitation rocketed, the di-

vorice rate trebled. We got it as wrong as could possibly be."

So she is now drafting a contract for marriage, asking has marriage any contractual obligations, if there is no-fault divorce? "Under the old divorce law, you at least knew you must not desert, be cruel, or commit adultery."

"Now you say 'I'll desert you do part: but who knows what is involved? It's not surprising that marriage has become unpopular, emptied of all its contents.' Have absent men any right to their children? Must we support elderly in-laws? We may laugh about pre-nuptial agreements in America, but at least they involve thinking out what exactly people undertake when they marry."

Like all college heads she is heavily into fundraising. A Coca-Cola heiress alumna has been generous, but St Anne's has hitherto specialised in writers (Tina Brown, Libby Purves, Jancis Robinson) rather than heiresses. Mrs Deech thrives on committees: "That's how you get things done. I am blessed with a fairly loud voice and a thick skin." Having enjoyed the benefits of the college creche for her daughter,

THE VALERIE GROVE INTERVIEW



ter, she fought for more creches. "What's the point of equal opportunities if women can't use them? My mother was always reminding me she had to give up work for me."

She hardly stops working. It seems years since she played the piano or baked a cake. She once rang me at midnight while hurtling down the M40 to her husband, an Oxford solicitor. Her chief recreation now is after-dinner speaking: everyone wants to know about the HFEA.

Her job there is to steer 20 colleagues to agreements that the public will accept. But public opinion is volatile. Last summer it swung one way on frozen embryos, another on the culling of triplets, back again on Mandy Allwood's couple. About Mrs Blood public opinion felt that the HFEA was clinging inflexibly to its tenet of "consent" which the unconscious Mr Blood could not give.

But regulatory bodies are never popular, she says. They have to balance so many interests. And the questions raised by embryology have only begun, with eugenic embryo tests for cystic fibrosis and breast cancer. "How much do we want to know? Shall we discard a baby because it might develop breast cancer? Do we discard all but the perfect babies?"

Public opinion will carry on cavilling, Mrs Deech does not waver. While science advances faster than our emotional capacity to cope with the ethical consequences, "I believe there is virtue and stability in tight regulation per se," she says, "reassures the public."

Hillman fades

THE TIMES FRIDAY JANUARY 17 1997

My memories of a cool dad



"I knew something was wrong," Rebecca says. "He was very worried about being 70. He kept saying he was too old and couldn't play"



Father and daughter: they shared the same shyness, looks and deadpan humour



Rebecca and her mother, Mary: they knew that Ronnie was suffering one of his depressions



Ronnie with the young Rebecca: "He understood everything that was going on with me"

The crowd was riveted by the saxophonist playing to the darkened, smoke-filled club, but as far as Ronnie Scott was concerned there was only one person in the room.

Rebecca, his only daughter from a long-standing relationship 25 years ago, sat watching from a table at her father's Soho jazz club as he played her favourite childhood song, *Send in the Clowns*.

It was October, 1995, and the last time she would ever see him play. Fifteen months later, two days before Christmas, she walked into his flat in Chelsea to find him lying dead, face down on the living-room carpet, beside his constant companion the television set. Provisional tests have proved inconclusive but some friends fear Scott, a depressive for much of his life, had committed suicide.

It is sadly ironic that, in the end, it had to be Rebecca who found him. Since she and her mother, Mary, moved to America when she was 14 months old (her parents' relationship had broken up), she saw her father only a few times a year when she came to London or he to the States. Despite the distance, father and daughter were close, sharing the same shyness, looks and deadpan sense of humour.

Rebecca, 24, and her mother knew in early December that Scott was suffering one of his depressions. Mary had tried to persuade him to buy a Christmas tree to cheer up the flat, but he was evasive. When Rebecca arrived to spend Christmas with him on December 17 his mood had not improved. He was deeply depressed about a dental problem which prevented him

from playing at his best and about his impending seventieth birthday on January 28.

"I knew something was wrong. It had been going on for quite some time," says Rebecca. "He was very worried about being 70. He kept saying he was too old and couldn't play. I said to him: 'You might be 70 but you don't look it and certainly don't act it.' But it didn't make any difference."

"He just said he wasn't in the Christmas spirit."

Urged by her mother to "try to make Christmas for Daddy," Rebecca bought decorations for the modest two-bedroom flat, situated in a block off the King's Road. She spent more than an hour putting them up but when she awoke the next morning Scott had pulled them all down again. "Not only had he taken down every single decoration, he had physically removed them from the flat," said Mary.

On the night before his death, Scott took Rebecca and a friend to dinner at The Ivy restaurant. Later they returned to Scott's eponymously named club and there was a disagreement over the amount of time Scott was spending talking to friends and colleagues. At one stage Rebecca was left sitting on her own for two hours. That night she went to stay with a friend and when she returned to her father's flat the following afternoon she found him.

It was an inglorious end for a man who brought magic into the lives of many people and created perhaps the most famous jazz club in the world, bringing the likes of Dizzy Gillespie, Coleman Hawkins and the Buddy Rich Orchestra to Soho. Scott, who was born

The Atlantic separated them, but Ronnie Scott and his illegitimate daughter remained close. Speaking for the first time since his death, she tells Carol Midgley how she missed her chance to say goodbye

in the East End, is revered for his contribution to jazz, but his private life was always complex.

He has two children, Nicholas, 32, by his former long-term partner Lisa Scott, and Rebecca, by Mary Scott, a former member of staff at his club. Although he never married (friends say he could never commit himself to one person), both women bear his name. His close friend Benny Green is reported as saying that he never got over the divorce of his parents, Sylvia and Jack. Jack, a successful dance-band saxophonist, committed suicide at 55 after discovering he had terminal cancer.

It is a testament to Scott's ability to compartmentalise his life that Nicholas and Rebecca have never met, but both were dear to him. Like his father, Nicholas, a magician, suffers from depression. This prevented him from attending his father's funeral at Golders Green crematorium, north London, last week.

"He was basically a very cool dad," says Rebecca. "He understood everything that was going on with me and never judged me or tried to preach to me about school or work. When I would go through different phases, like getting my eyebrow pierced, he would just say 'Oh, Rebecca' and let it go."

'He was playing just to her — I was almost in tears'

"He was very witty and quick. He didn't have any back teeth and he was able to make these really hideous faces at me. Sometimes he would just walk around with his nose taped up and his eye taped down for no reason. No one could make me laugh like him."

Regulars at Ronnie Scott's, which he ran with his business partner Peter King, were used to Scott's banter. "We are very impressed with the way you are controlling yourselves. What have you been drinking, Cemen? Why don't you all join hands and contact the living?" he would tease the audience.

When Rebecca and Mary first moved to America, they spent four years living in a New York hotel while Mary carved out a living as a booking agent. She now runs her own catering business from Brooklyn, while Rebecca runs a club in Providence, Rhode Island.

Rebecca's early memories are of the club in Frith Street which dominated her father's life, although at the time she was too young to appreciate it. "When I was about six I hated coming over to London because I didn't have many friends here. I didn't like the club because I remember it was always so dark and smoky, but as I got older and made friends I began to appreciate how privileged I was. Dad is revered for his playing: really admired everywhere and not just by his own generation. I get to meet all kinds of famous musicians who play at the club in Rhode Island and they are in awe of him. Noel Gallagher from Oasis was once chatting to me and when I said my dad was Ronnie Scott he couldn't believe it. He told me he had been to Dad's club by himself just to sit and listen to the music."

"But Dad would never acknowledge it himself. He was modest to a fault, even to the point of signing postcards from my friends back home. But I think deep down, way, way down, he acknowledged it."

Lisa, the mother of Nicholas, believes that, in the end, Scott felt he had let people down. "I'm very very sad that he died the way he did but in a way, although avoidable, it was inevitable," she said. "He was a kind man, a lovely man who wanted to do right by people. But in the end he didn't do right by himself. There was a lot of self-loathing there and it drove him down."

In his past during difficult times Scott tried to take his own life several times but received expert psychiatric care.

Mary, 53, believes Scott's recent illnesses — he had had operations for thrombosis as well as his dental problems — drove him to despair. "He couldn't see his way through this illness," she said. "Before

his normal standards and he couldn't stand it. The music he played was like a Picasso painting and expressed all his inner turmoil, but recently the light had gone out of his eyes. He had been reticent for most of his life but recently he had taken to drinking."

"He lived his life the way he wanted. The Ronnie I know and love is the one who would take me to a restaurant, sit down at a table, then pretend to the waiter that he had no idea who I was. He was a hysterically funny man and my best friend."

"That night at the club when he played *Send in the Clowns* is so memorable for me. I sent him the sheet music to that song when I first heard Sinatra sing it in America and he put his version on an album. Becky always loved that recording of her father's — when she was eight she choreographed some children dancing to it. It is very significant for us. That night he was playing directly to her, his saxophone was pointing directly towards her and I was almost in tears. I will never forget it."



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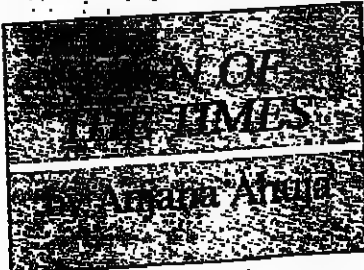
AUSTIN REED

Hillary fades as Liam triumphs in the name game

WHILE we were all marvelling at the appearance of Liam in the list of British top ten boys' names, American onomasticists (people who study names) noticed something very striking.

Hillary, which had been becoming increasingly popular, was suddenly nowhere to be seen. "It's the quickest fall in a name I've seen," said Cleveland Kent Evans, a rather improbably named onomasticist based in Nebraska.

According to Mr Evans, whose discovery was reported earlier this month in the *International Herald Tribune*, for every ten babies christened Hillary in 1992, there was only one in 1993. Since Mrs Clinton (or her husband) took office, mothers



became afraid to burden their child with the H-word because of the assumption that it is out of admiration for the First Lady. There may be some precedent in that — after all, how many Adolfs do you know?

And, although traditional girls' names such as Eleanor (No.22), Molly (No.28) and Georgina (No.39)

are becoming trendy again in Britain, Margaret may well have been buried for good by its unshakable association with the Iron Lady herself.

Also reported in the *IHT* was "evidence" of a long-held suspicion that the choice of a name reflects parental breeding.

College-educated mothers and fathers tend to derive inspiration for names from the Bible, history and literature, and are therefore more likely to favour classics such as Edward and Elizabeth.

Parents who dropped out of college, Mr Evans says, tend to look more to popular and contemporary culture for their choice. As a result, their children bear the same names

as pop stars or television celebrities. That probably explains why Britain suffered a rash of Kyles not many years ago, and why Liam surfaced this year in the list of top ten popular names.

Mr Evans has sifted through the birth records in the state of Oregon to illustrate his thesis. College graduates chose the following names for their boys: Matthew, Nicholas, Zachary, Alexander, Benjamin, Ryan, Andrew, and Joshua.

In contrast, the top ten boys' names among the children of high school drop-outs were: Michael, Austin, Daniel, Christopher, Tyler, Brandon, Christian, and David. It cannot be long before Brad emerges as a front-runner.

Philip Howard



■ Send in the clowns — don't bother, they're here

Clowns have far more appeal than serious men of affairs. Their vulnerability and impotence in a cruel world attract the sympathy of the man in the stalls and the woman in the polling booth. Shakespeare knew their uses to lighten the intolerable burden of tragedy and to make shrewd points beneath the bulbous nose and the permanent bad hair day of the clown. And from Buster Keaton to Rowan Atkinson and Rik Mayall, clowns have milked the sympathy and followed in the pratfalls of those old fools.

"Don't laugh, it's cruel," admonished Max Wall. "Don't laugh at me 'cos I'm a fool," croaked Norman Wisdom. And their audiences fell about in sympathy with their misfortunes and clumsiness.

In the run-up to the general election (the longest straight man's feed in the history of showbusiness) our politicians could learn more useful lessons from clowns than from their busy crowds of press advisers, ennobled advertising agents, speech-writers and policy wonks. Any fool could have told John Major and Tony Blair that it is bad business to be nasty to tramps. This may play well to hard-hearted readers of the *Daily Mail* on suburban commuter lines from Metroland and Dulwich Village. But Stan Laurel, Charlie Chaplin and other old boys from Fred Karno's Factory made the tramp, cheerful and cheeky in adversity, one of the strongest archetypes in the English imagination. Screaming Lord Sutch (the longest-serving party leader in politics) and Sir James Goldsmith's barmy army will attract such few votes as they get from this natural sympathy for no-hopers and outsiders.

Playing in London at present there are three shows with superb modern clowns of different genres. Their policies could make the election more effective as well as more cheerful. Slava in *Showshow* says nothing — in the tradition of Harpo Marx and Pierrot, personified by Jean-Gaspard Debureau and immortalised in *Les Enfants du Paradis*. But his surrealist silences say more with 20 times more wit than Prime Minister's Questions. And he engages the audience for his clown's equivalent of a party political broadcast by spreading a pseudo-cobweb over their heads, turning a blizzard on them, and bouncing huge balls on their heads — all metaphors for the confusing business of life and politics.

Victoria Chaplin and Jean Baptiste Thierree in *Le Cercle Invisible* are also superb mimics, circus magicians and clowns. They too work through indirections, silence and surprise. Jean Baptiste has a permanent smile and funny hair, a bit like Tony Blair. But Jean Baptiste has the vague, zany, endearing smile of the clown that includes his audience in his private world, not the professional rictus as advised by television coaches, which both excludes and alarms the audience. And Victoria glides more gracefully and transforms her message and her costume more elegantly and smiles more secretively than any politician.

The bounding young men and women in *Saltimbanca* come from a more violent school of clowning. The invention of elastic ropes strong enough for bun-jumping has transformed this sort of knockabout clowning into flying on a string. It is the one that the small boys like best. These bouncers and clowns do talk, but it is in an incomprehensible gibberish that sounds like a birdlike dialect of a Romance language. But it is far more comprehensible and impressive than a thousand doctored soundbites.

When clowns weep great coloured tears down their powdered cheeks, their audience weeps and smiles with them. When politicians use the red or blue tear trick on their posters, the result is disturbing and confusing. A politician knows a good joke when he steals one. But when a politician tries a spot of satire about his opponents, he has his audience rolling in the aisles — towards the exits.

A government of clowns, a comedyocracy, would be a ship of fools. We do not really want a clown in Downing Street, not even Charlie Chaplin or Sir James. Our statesmen long for the love and happiness the clown inspires. But they could learn some modesty and humanity, as well as good humour and the art of silence from our clowns. And we can escape from the follies of the election campaign into the far more serious world of proper clowns.

Peter Brooks
17.1.97



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High-minded and doomed

Blair and Ashdown want to break the mould, but the effort may break them

Could Parliament be dethroned? For months there has been gossip about a flirtation between two party leaders. Tony Blair and Paddy Ashdown are bonding. What do we make of it?

The iron fences around the Palace of Westminster enclose much worldliness, but no spot more cynical than the Press Gallery bar. Here, words like "principle" and "friendship" raise a titter, the phrase "altruistic motives" a hollow laugh. God's name is unknown here, except as an expletive.

Put in hand, the lobby correspondent would never quite have got the measure of Joan of Arc, attributing her virtues, perhaps, to a spin-doctor under deep cover. Commentary on Thomas More, missing his mainstream, would have been an enigma. Gladstone a puzzle to the press bar. Seen from this cave, the explanation for any partnership between politicians from competing parties is uncomplicated. Each must be in it for himself and his party. Each hopes to use the other, ditching him when his help is no longer needed.

To such observers, Mr Blair is simply arranging a small insurance policy against the contingency that he fails to win enough seats to govern alone, or runs into mutiny. Mr Ashdown is manoeuvring his crew into a hove-to position: ready to sell his support for a high price and a limited period. The bar wonders only who will take whom for a ride. It rejects the contrary interpretation as hopelessly high-minded. This is that Blair and Ashdown have been growing personally closer, kindred spirits, sharing more than with many on their own teams. Both are repelled by the tribalism of British politics, both conscious of a purpose in public life beyond winning for the tribe.

Naturally each sees material advantage in their tryst, but also something more: a refuge. Neither has many grown-ups to talk to in his own party, and even those grown-ups are objects of suspicion. Who can suppose Tony Blair feels more relaxed with Robin Cook than Paddy Ashdown, Mr Ashdown happier with Simon Hughes than Mr Blair?

Co-operation across party, both believe, would be good in itself. The adversarial nature of British politics is self-defeating, party a sour and blinkered thing. Would it not enrich public affairs if people of goodwill formed habits of co-operation, bringing Parliament into accord with what the nation yearns for: government in the national interest by a deliberative as-

sembly of reasonable men and women. all doing what's best for the country — the Athenian ideal?

The coming election, each muses, could mark the birth of a millennial idea: dethronement. At the very least this would remove grit from the legislative machine, but in wilder moments, both dream of a real constitutional shift, a dawning era of governments-of-all-the-talents, fantasy Cabinets which are not a game: the consensualising of British politics.

Ashdown has thought this through and sees electoral reform and coalition government at the heart of such a shift. Blair, a more instinctive man, knows the idea of brotherhood resonates with voters. It resonates with his own beliefs. And it answers the electorate's fear of the Labour Party, which he shares. Impelled, then, both by belief and insecurity, he latches to broaden his political base beyond his parliamentary tribe. Whether by informal coalition, or by triggering a schism in the Labour Party and regrouping British politics around the Centre, he cannot say. But when he talks about "changing the face of British politics", he means it. Journalists have difficulty with people who mean it.

During the 1980s, when our century's titanic struggle between class interests seemed at last to be resolving itself in favour of the bourgeoisie, Blair surely caught a national mood of irritation with adversarial politics. Nobody who has caught a bus could miss it. It is the hankering after a new politics: the mood that spawned the SDP, and to which Oswald Mosley once hoped he could appeal.

There is no logical connection between Tony Blair and the Labour Party except that he leads it. His philosophical soulmates lie right outside the mainstream of party politics: Ben Pimlott, Andrew Marr, Geoff Mulgan, Peter Hennessy, and the Australian who has become his unofficial chaplain, Peter Thomson. These are not party men. And Blair's yearning for a new kind of politics will have been bolstered by something further: the Christian half of the Christian Socialist equation. No

reading of Blair's story can finish except with the suspicion that the Christian part goes deeper.

Fleet Street has a problem handling this. David Icke could be dismissed as mad. Tony Blair is not mad, so what do we make of his early thoughts of entering the priesthood, his assessment of the Rev Peter Thomson as "spellbinding"? Newspapersmen tend to shrug off such exoticisms as though they were bolt-on accessories to an otherwise conventional personality, rather than part of its engine. Sometimes we ignore the obvious, especially when it is hard to handle in the Press Gallery bar and the obvious here is that Blair's faith is a wellspring of Tony Blair's life. Faith, insecurity and ambition: a potent cocktail throughout history.

God has been good to him. Selection for Sedgfield, when a closed shortlist was unexpectedly opened for the youthful unknown, came from the realms of the politically supernatural. And if John Smith had not died just when he did, the next miraculous event would not have occurred. Now — John Major's potentially winning cards inexplicably dashed from his hand — the triptych of miracles is in place above the political altar. Like the Red Sea, the waters of public affairs have parted for this young man's passage. It will be dismissed as absurd to venture what follows, but it is ventured regardless: the thought must have crossed Tony Blair's mind that he is part of God's plan for Britain.

Two views, then, of Blair's and Ashdown's friendship: an unkind opinion held in the Press Gallery bar; and a fairytale view from the world of ideals. There is a reasonable possibility that the fairytale view is accurate. These men may really hope to break the mould of British politics.

If so, they are doomed. Has Tony Blair any idea of the furies that would await him should he, once installed, draw back from the role for which, grinding their teeth, his parliamentary tribe is striving to install him? To get there, each of those 350 odd Labour MPs will have fought and beaten candidates from the other parties. Some

of the most bitter battles will have been with Liberal Democrat rivals. Victorious Labour MPs will arrive at the Commons steeped in the blood of the hustings. When they enter, they will enter a place soaked in the bile of adversarial politics. Every memory, every rule, every unwritten phrase in the unwritten constitution — the very seating plan of the Chamber itself — is infused with the spirit of tribe and the habits of party.

Does Blair kid himself that his tribe wants him for anything beyond the prize, it reckons he can then deliver them in that place? Hegemony: power, jobs; the grinding of rivals' faces in the dirt: this is the prize, this the reason why the Labour *Impi* bite their lips and carry Blair's spear. Should victory be followed by any kind of sharing of spoils with the enemy, their chief would not be forgiven.

They will never let him get away with it. The FLP will never touch electoral reform. Once the Liberal Democrats realise this, Ashdown's party will start to give him serious trouble, especially beyond Westminster, where, across swathes of Britain, Labour is the enemy. They will already be smarting from loss of seats through coalition talk. They are not in politics, delivering Focus in the rain, to rescue Labour leaders from their own extremists. The idea that their own leader would doff his cap and provide a rent-a-majority for a beleaguered Labour leader is anathema to them: fantasy from the realms of pure mathematics. Blair cannot deliver electoral reform, and without it Ashdown cannot deliver his party. Tony Blair has about as much chance of usefully involving Liberal Democrats in the next government's policymaking as the Northern Ireland peace women have of forming a cross-tribe Hutu-Tutsi Cabinet in Rwanda.

Ramsay MacDonald tried it. Oswald Mosley dreamt of it. Jo Grimond, Jeremy Thorpe, David Steel talked about it. David Owen (in more ways than it is fashionable to remember a flawed prototype for Tony Blair: so much less substantial than he seemed) began it. You can't do it.

Perhaps the Labour leader does know this. Perhaps the bar is right, he plans only to use the Liberal Democrat leader to polevault him over the Scottish Parliament ditch, then betray them. If so, then trebles all round. Otherwise, prepare to carve the name Blair alongside those of MacDonald, Mosley, Owen and Jenkins on the cenotaph of those foolhardy souls fallen in the cause of a new politics for their country.

Matthew Parris

Clinton's new sobriety

Bronwen Maddox
expects an older President to be wiser

At President Clinton's first inauguration, Warren Beatty and Barbra Streisand were guests of honour, and the wide-eyed 30-year-olds whom he had hired as White House aides queued to give their first soundbites to the television cameras. The razzmatazz was the overture to a presidency which even in Mr Clinton's supporters' eyes was inconsistent, often naive, and achieved only modest steps towards its aims.

This year, the Clintons intend Monday's celebration to be "simple", "elegant" and "less of a megillah", according to reports. And financially clean: the budget, although still above \$20 million, has been sharply cut, because corporate donations of more than \$100 each have been ruled out. The White House hopes that this sobriety will be the harbinger of a second term which leaves a clearer and more forceful legacy.

Those hopes are reasonable, provided that the President resists the indulgences of his first term. The charge against him on the evidence of the past four years is that he is a charlatan who likes to please everyone, and has surrounded himself with scandal while betraying principles traditionally at the heart of the Democratic programme.

Dick Morris, Mr Clinton's now-disgraced political consultant, published memoirs this week which paint a portrait of a White House divining its policies by holding a mirror up each day to public opinion, and spending more on opinion polls than any previous presidency.

New Republic magazine, which unashamedly endorsed Clinton in its election editorial, noted that "Few in America can be confident that a man so eager to please, and so routinely unable to distinguish those with a valid claim on his compassion from those without, will not make similar mistakes again." The mistakes, critics argue, are that he swung abruptly from "liberal" themes in the first two years, such as gays in the military, to co-opting Republicans' traditional themes after their triumph in the mid-term elections.

They also hold against him the collapse of the grandiose health-care reforms, the failure to do much about dismal educational standards, and the signing of the harsh Republican-backed Welfare Bill. In summary, they say, the poorest have suffered most while the middle class has been untouched.

These criticisms have force. And yet, there are solid achievements from the first term which are likely to form the main themes of the second term and the core of Mr Clinton's legacy. In retrospect, despite oscillating over individual policies, Mr Clinton has adhered consistently, since he ran for the governorship of Arkansas, to one political philosophy: a fiscally conservative brand of Democratic politics. While socially liberal, he has kept the totems of permissive liberalism such as gay rights and abortion rights at arm's length.

In his first term, he pursued an outward-looking foreign policy, despite the isolationist instincts of many in both parties. His success in clinching the Gatt and North American Free Trade Agreement pacts may eventually be judged one of his most valuable achievements.

In the next four years, these characteristics — a concern for the poorest, tempered by a wish to curb spending, and a willingness to engage with the world — are likely to be more pronounced. The domestic arena will be dominated by two main themes: education and balancing the budget. One of Mr Clinton's main campaign pledges was to allow college fees to be offset against tax.

At the same time, the White House foreign policy team, now under the leadership of Madeleine Albright, has shown a determination to remain engaged in distant conflicts despite the uncertainty of their outcomes. In the treatment of both Ireland and the Middle East, the White House shows a growing sophistication and a willingness to play the part of dispassionate broker, pressing Siran Rein and the Israeli Government towards dialogue with their opponents.

By building on these strengths, Mr Clinton may achieve a further goal: the lasting rehabilitation of the Democratic Party into an electable party of the centre. According to George Stephanopoulos, the senior Clinton adviser who is leaving Washington for academia and the media, "It is not unlike what Tony Blair is trying to do in Britain, smashing the myth of an ultra-liberal, ultra-permissive party, and endorsing the notion of personal responsibility. Democrats for too long were hostage to interest groups and did not speak to the broad middle class."

It would be wrong to expect grand, controversial reforms from Mr Clinton. Even if they were in his character, which they are not, congressional opposition and lack of time would almost certainly frustrate them. Like Tony Blair, he is likely to duck the main challenge facing his country: weaning the middle class off the social security and medical entitlements which underpin its current standard of living.

But even if Mr Clinton's legacy is one of small reforms, he may still prove to have succeeded in a crucial task: restoring public confidence that government has a role in improving people's lives without being financially profligate. Despite the scandals swirling around the President, voters evidently found that principle credible enough to return him to the White House.

Hey — diet

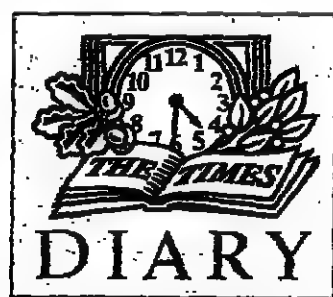
THE DUCHESS OF YORK, the newly appointed "spokesperson" for Weight Watchers, has put her daughter Princess Beatrice on a diet. In Argentina last week, while visiting her mother, the Duchess was supervising a children's swim when she noticed that Princess B was looking "a bit chunky" in her swimming togs. "I very

much fear that Beatrice is blessed with her mum's genes," she said in an interview. "She's only eight, but she definitely can pack it on a bit."

So the little princess is on short commons for a while. She has been told that from now on it is "no bread, and no more fizzy drinks, only water". The duchess added: "I told her, 'Today, for lunch, forget about the quiche. Instead have chicken. And pick fruit, not chips.' It worked. She did it. But it was because she herself wanted to. Poor baby. I think overeating sort of runs in the family."

Good Deedes

JEREMY DEEDES, the managing editor of *The Daily Telegraph*, stands accused of penny-pinching after dispatching his father Lord Deedes, 83, to Angola to cover the Princess of Wales's visit for the newspaper. Lord Deedes, old Africa hand and the model for Evelyn Waugh's *Boat of the Beast* in his novel *Scop*, travelled economy class with Air Gabon. "You could say I'm down to the mean-



ness of his son," said Deedes fits, "but Boot of the Beast makes his own arrangements. Remember he is a catcher of buses, not taxis."

Old news

WHEN Lord Wyatt of Woodford sat on the panel of judges for the Oldie of the Year Awards a couple of years ago, he put his ear in at every opportunity for Cilla Black, but she failed to make the shortlist. Among judges this year, Sir Ludovic Kennedy has been baffled for Ernie Wise but he hasn't made it either. Last on the dancelfour for 1997 are Barbara Castle, 80, for her campaigns on behalf of pensioners; Lord Runcie, 75, for revelations in *The Times* about the Royal Family and about gay vicars; Sir Alec Guinness, 82, for his

diaries; and June Whitfield, 71, for her return to form in television sitcoms. Result next month.

Team work

NEW LABOUR may have made a practice of stealing Conservative clothes, but now there is disturbing evidence of Tory transvestism from the Blairite press. The latest issue of the *New Statesman* invites entries for "Fantasy Politics", an exercise in competitive Cabinet-making where the magazine's readers (both of them) select



"It is turning pear-shaped"

their dream team to lead the country, and win prizes if their nominees do well.

The Stagers claims that the idea, first outlined in their pages a week ago, was "conceived after an original dinner". How odd then that in the pages of *The Times* on December 23, one of my rightish colleagues floated the idea for a new political game called "Fantasy Cabinet" which invited readers to draw up their ideal top-table 22.

Despite newspaper allegations about his relationship with the young homosexual Paul Stone, Jerry Hayes, MP, looked fit when he turned out at a memorial service in London this week. "The News of the World diet," he explained, "it's a very fast way to lose weight."

No prizes

AFTER 33 years, Ian Fleming's family are back in control of the James Bond books. Fleming's nieces Kate and Lucy have bought back a 51 per cent stake of Gildred, the company that owns the copyrights. Their uncle sold it to the Booker Group in 1963 to lower his tax burden, leaving his family with the remaining 49 per cent. Fleming's widow, Ann, took



Lucy Fleming: Bond girl

against Booker and its chairman the late Lord Campbell of Eskan personally and the profits Booker made from the books. She was so virulent in her attacks that Campbell considered suing her for defamation.

The original deal was more civilised. Ian Fleming was playing a round of golf with Campbell when he turned to him in mid-swing and asked "Jock, would you like to buy me?"

P.H.S

مكتبة الأصل



THE MASTERS NOW

Readers and writers in this season of the polls

SAMUEL JOHNSON called this "the Saturnalian season", the time at which the unruly voters of Britain could look forward to being ruled for a day. Two hundred years later our computer-driven party politics may seem often dull and bland; the campaign may seem endless, the campaigners' claims castist and cautious by turn; but a democratic election remains a great and dangerous thing. It is an opportunity to be swayed by appeals and bribes; but it is also a chance to think ourselves into the minds of those who rule us. This election in particular demands an imaginative adjustment of mind — and it should get it from us all.

The Saturnalia was a Roman festival of free speech and gambling in which society's roles were reversed; the gentlemen served the servants, the matrons their maids. Everyone knew that at some time the party had to end. But for all sides it was an opportunity to half-be the other. A modern election campaign has many mad Saturnalian aspects. But it too is a time to see decisions from the other side.

Every voter can think in the coming months how he or she might have dealt with the events which so bamboozled their leaders. Those who feel themselves forever commanded by political masters can themselves become a kind of master: those who find few opportunities for individual expression can on polling day express themselves in the way that matters most. The vote may be inadequate. The results may be disappointing. The relief from a sense of misrule, whoever wins, may be only temporary. But unless we fully seize our opportunity, we are all unworthy of it.

The task of *The Times* in this season is to identify those who seem to us to best serve the broadest interests of Britain, to match most closely the shifting contours of this country. For three years we have watched Messrs Major, Blair and Ashdown struggle with events and each other. We have seen the Labour Party fall under its leader's heel and the Conservative Party come close to collapse over its leader's head. We have witnessed words and actions good and bad from every House of Commons' aisle. In this Saturnalian time we will continue to stand back and describe the acts of our elected rulers. But we must also attempt a more seasonal act of imagination.

During the coming weeks our team of political reporters will describe what they see and hear without favour; that is their training and their best tradition. Our analysts will seek out the coherence and the lack of it in the speeches and policy papers that will daily pour forth. Our columnists and our letter-writers will deliver their own different views; and the opposite page will include a proper range of all opinion. We promise that no other newspaper will strive so hard for the balance that shows our business at its best. When election day arrives, our readers will be able to look down on their rulers and freely and informally judge them.

But the Editor must also use his imagination of what the various alternative governments would be like and which result would be best. How sincere are their members' present promises, how capable are they of carrying out their claims, what will be the impact of victory and what of defeat? There is a tradition that at the end of this crazy season *The Times* makes its own judgment as to what individuals and which party should be elected.

It is in our nature to represent regularly no interest, no politician and no party. We consider the description of events for the verdict of our readers as a task of far greater import and responsibility than that of giving our own verdict. But at the season's end we will give a verdict.

To judge by opinion polls, about half our readers will disagree with whatever decision we reach. Those readers should at least know, however, that, unlike many other newspapers, we have not reached our verdict in advance. If *The Daily Telegraph* does not put its forces behind a Conservative victory, and if *The Guardian* and *The Independent* do not hold open the Downing Street door for Mr Blair, then we will declare black to be white and the Saturnalia in permanent session. Our own judgment awaits the work of the campaign.

What means of judgment should we use? In recent elections we have supported the Conservative Party. We did so with enthusiasm when Margaret Thatcher had both identified what needed to be done for Britain and shown the courage and skill to lead her party into doing it. We supported the Conservatives more reluctantly under John Major when both purpose and prowess were less clear. Today we see a governing party whose claims to be conservative are loud but whose leadership is weak and whose internal coherence is severely wanting. Its credentials for a fifth term in office require testing to the utmost.

We expect little purity of purpose from the manifestos which either Mr Major or Mr

Blair will present to the country. This is not an election season in which the choice is stark. The Conservatives do not present themselves as radical reducers of the welfare state; a re-elected administration would not be ruthlessly determined to lower taxation and spending, still less to demand a fundamental renegotiation of our relations with the European Union. A new Labour government would not make substantial extensions to welfare; it would not raise taxes to previous heights and would not make "more spending" its watchword in action; its policy towards the EU is marked by many of the same evasions that we face from the Conservatives today.

It would be surprising if the details of Mr Major's manifesto did not please us more than that of Mr Blair. Mr Major is likely to be more persuasive in his opposition to Franco-German plans for Europe; Mr Blair leads a party that, from the end of "opt-outs" to the introduction of the "social chapter", is always too trusting of those plans. Mr Blair still has the opportunity to clarify his scepticism towards rapid irrevocable shifts in Britain's relationship with the Continent. His responses on this issue over the coming weeks — and the responses of his senior colleagues — are certain to weigh heavily here. Yet there is always more to being conservative than claiming the name. Affairs around us are not so universally good that we will automatically endorse the politicians who want the least change.

This country is changing; it has responsibilities to itself, its neighbours and partners in a world which is changing rapidly. We are cautious towards Labour's constitutional ambitions; rather more so on Scottish devolution, than on the removal of voting rights from hereditary peers. The test will be whether we judge Labour's plans and planning to be in overall harmony with the country as it is; or whether they are alien imports for insincere ends.

Both main parties share similar patterns of policy-making: they have their leaders, their leaders' offices and advisers, their much-reduced parliamentary and party structures and a growing reliance on using public opinion to control internal dissent.

But they are in different stages of development. Mr Major is a Prime Minister whom we know well; but he heads an ill-disciplined, incoherent party which we can scarcely recognise from the one that Lady Thatcher once commanded. Mr Blair would be an unknown prime minister leading a party which, with our long-standing support, he has ruthlessly shaped in his own image. Labour's momentum of change has not yet ceased. The necessary next phase of Conservative change has yet to begin. We will seek to identify the party leader who best matches the temper of this cautious country in these

changing and often confusing times. Dr Johnson, who wrote his "Saturnalian season" address to the electors of Great Britain in 1774, had more imagination than most of us could ever have; and yet he hardly needed it for his politics. For him the preference for royal prerogative over rival sources of authority was paramount. Thus he was a Tory.

This term so changed its meaning in the years thereafter that he would hardly have recognised himself in his successors a few decades later, still less so today. When commentators jest that the Labour leader may now be the best Tory we have, they are not blazing any new linguistic path. Tony Blair may yet persuade us and others that he best understands the temper of the country. He or his successors may yet quietly claim the "conservative" title.

WERE DR JOHNSON to return to Britain in 1997, he would have to think again about his Saturnalia. Masters and servants are not what they were. We are all voters, and masters, now. Yet, as in 1774, he would have smelt out the eternal dangers of deceit and cant, berating once again those politicians who "are vehement and clamorous only that they may be sooner hired to be silent". He would have sniffed out the slightest hints of republicanism: "a man may hate his king, yet not love his country". He would have distrusted people of both parties for promising "to endeavour what he knows his endeavours unable to effect". He would have run foul of every modern adviser with his remarks about the factious and inconstant multitude. Now, as then, he would have searched for and praised the "true patriot".

At the very end of it all, he would have been surely enthused — as so many other great Britons of the past would have been enthused — by the possibilities of engaging in this election season. The way ahead is not as clear as he once saw it or as we would like to see it now. All the greater then is the need for the most balanced reporting, the most independent analysis and the most imaginative engagement. And that, with the help of our readers and writers, we will provide to the full extent of our power.



Saturnalian opportunity for all

'Obfuscation' over Gulf War illness

From the Countess of Mar

Sir, The credit for any success in persuading the Ministry of Defence to admit to the use of organophosphates in the vicinity of British troops who served in the Gulf should be attributed not to myself or to Members of Parliament (Letters, December 28, January 1) but to the determined and persistent members of Her Majesty's Armed Forces, many of whom are very sick, who have thoroughly researched all aspects of the so-called "syndrome" and have ensured that those of us in the Palace of Westminster who have shown an interest are kept informed of all new developments.

The results of the research conducted by doctors at the UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas, published in the January 15 edition of *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, indicate that there is a Gulf War syndrome suffered by some Gulf veterans and that the illness is caused by wartime exposure to combinations of low-level nerve agents and other common chemicals.

It is significant that those who advise the British Government on the illness suffered by both Gulf veterans and farmers who have been exposed to organophosphate sheep dips, of whom I am one, appear not to have considered the fact that what they are faced with is not psychologically induced illness or some manifestation of known illness, but new disease.

There are many factors which are common to both groups. Until there is a thorough clinical evaluation from which a scientific framework of signs and symptoms can be developed, it is unlikely that epidemiological studies will tell us much more than we already know.

To the cynical, the government's reliance upon epidemiology is merely a means of delaying the day of reckoning. We should all now be pressing the Government to commission immediately clinical studies on classical lines to enable all those, whether they be farmers or men and women who served in the Gulf, who believe their illness is as a result of exposure to organophosphates in combination with chemical agents to receive a proper diagnosis; for methods of treatment to be devised, and for the victims to be appropriately compensated.

The time for obfuscation and procrastination is past.

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE YOUNG,
Department of Transport,
Great Minster House,
76 Marsham Street, SW1,
January 13.

Winter swims

From Mr Cyril Wood

Sir, Dr Thomas Stuttaford states (article, January 2) that "Mid-winter Serpentine bathers should either be certain that they are free of heart disease, or leave charity fundraising to others".

By agreement with the Royal Parks Agency the only people allowed to swim in the Serpentine during the winter months are members of the Serpentine Swimming Club, founded in 1864, which holds races every Saturday morning of the year at 8am.

In my experience no member has ever swum in order to raise money for charity. Our tradition is simply to race to win.

Yours faithfully,
CYRIL WOOD (President,
Serpentine Swimming Club),
45 Thistledeane,
Thames Ditton, Surrey,
January 8.

Honours due

From Mr George Greenfield

Sir, So Dr Desmond Flower has died (obituary, January 8); a fine publisher and a man of culture. He slipped into retirement over 20 years ago without the knighthood he well deserved. And so in their time have Jonathan Cape, André Deutsch, Robin Denniston, Gordon Graham, Hamish Hamilton, Paul Hodder-Williams, Jack Murray, Paul Scherer and others.

All of them earned the country large amounts of foreign currency through their export sales and spread the image of Britain worldwide.

PR men get the accolade — and better, God bless us — as do pop singers, pop composers and pop lyricists. Why have postwar governments and their honours and awards committees signally failed (with the notable exceptions of Sir William Collins and Harold Wilson's friend, George Weidenfeld) to honour those distinguished exponents of our home-bred culture, the leading publishers, male and female?

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE GREENFIELD,
20 Well Road, Hampstead, NW3,
January 8.

Odds even

From Dr John Burscough

Sir, How on earth would one decide whom to cheer for in an alteration involving Max Clifford, Derek Hanton and Robert Kilroy-Silk (report, January 14)?

Yours faithfully,
JOHN BURSCOUGH,
Woodland View,
Melton Road,
Wrawby, Brigg, North Lincolnshire,
January 14.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Quality of privatised rail assessed

From Sir George Young,
Secretary of State for Transport

Sir, The recent discussion of the share prices of privatised rail companies and franchised operators (report and article, January 7) risks obscuring the dramatic success of the Government's policy for the railways, on which I was glad to note the positive comments in your leading article of January 13.

Less than a year after the first passenger franchises passed to private operators, there has already been a significant improvement in quality, coupled with investment commitments to raise standards still higher over the coming years. Of the 18 franchises awarded to date, not one is running fewer services than before, and two thirds of them are running more. These operators are also pledged to a major investment programme to replace and refurbish existing stock, which, we calculate, will involve them spending a billion pounds over ten years.

Increases in key fares are also capped at the rate of inflation for the first three years, and at 1 per cent below inflation for the four years after that. But perhaps the most remarkable indicator of all is that privatisation is also set to save the taxpayer money. After seven years, the subsidy for the first 18 will be less than one third of what British Rail required before privatisation. That represents extraordinary value for money.

Changes in the share prices of privatised companies, such as the rolling-stock leasing company, Porterbrook, which was sold at the very start of the process, are relevant only to the extent that they reflect growing public and market confidence in the prospects for the railway.

Similarly, the share prices of companies set up to bid for passenger franchises have nothing to do with delivery value for the taxpayer. That has been achieved by selling franchises in a way that maximises the competition for the right to operate them.

The above will amply demonstrate to your readers how the Government has succeeded in combining improved value for the taxpayer with guaranteed and continuing improvements in service quality for the rail passenger. This achievement is as remarkable as it will be lasting.

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE YOUNG,
Department of Transport,
Great Minster House,
76 Marsham Street, SW1,
January 13.

Family assets

From Mr William T. Hutton

Sir, Mr John Redwood (letter, January 9) writes about the advantages of "returning the family silver to the family, to use it better than the State used it". This sounds a fine principle so long as it remains within the family — presumably he means a British family.

Then how does he reconcile this admirable notion with the sad fact that the family no longer owns any of the car industry to which he refers and that the utilities seem also to be disappearing from the family's reach?

Nor can I see how there will be any silver left to be transferred to Brussels by the time it has been dispersed outside the family. Does this also make one a family-sect?

Yours faithfully,
W. T. HUTTON,
8 Sutherland Avenue,
Peters Wood, Orpington, Kent,
January 9.

From Lord Pearson of Rannoch

Sir, John Redwood is wrong to suggest that we are giving away our sovereignty to "Europe".

We are paying our European competitors billions a year to take it.

Yours faithfully,
PEARSON OF RANNOCH,
52 Minorities, EC3,
January 10.

Water buffalo

From Mr Derek Headly

Sir, Mr Martin Nicol is wrong in referring to the sladang as a water buffalo (letter, January 13). It is a wild ox, *Bos gaurus* or the Indian Gaur. The Malaysian subspecies is *Bos gaurus hubbardsi*, called "sladang" in Malay. I believe there is still a healthy herd in the Malaysian forest. I am sure no sladang has ever been domesticated.

Sladang only charged if wounded, badly frightened or to protect their calves. When they did so, the bull had a take-off from a standing start comparable to a polo pony, despite his very considerable bulk (weighs 5ft 6in or 6ft). He is one of the noblest and most beautiful big game animals in the world, a true thoroughbred.

Business letters, page 27
Sport letters, page 40

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046.

Human cost of landmine legacy

From Professor Emeritus
George Murdoch

Sir, While landmines do kill (reports, January 14, 15) they are designed primarily to maim. Some destroy the sexual organs as well as the legs.

The effect of their use is the maiming of more than a million persons worldwide, a number that is increasing by the day. Huge tracts of land are mined and cannot be farmed, with harsh economic results. The removal of each landmine requires painstaking effort and is costly and time consuming. The surgery requires skill and an understanding of the limb replacement, the prosthesis. The prosthetist (limb fitter) requires a minimum of 20 months' training (four years in the United Kingdom). Each amputee requires continuing lifetime care. The educational, human and financial resource required is clearly colossal.

I believe it is our duty to persuade the Government to pursue a policy of a total ban on landmines and to do what it can to stop America, Russia, China, South Korea and I suspect others making and exporting these obscene devices.

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE MURDOCH
(President, the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics, 1977-80),
Middle Church, Flat C,
6 Tay Street, Perth,
January 15.

Fenced commons

From Professor Jay Appleton

Sir, Jill Parkin gives a fair account of the rival interests of the opposing lobbies in the fencing of heath commons (Weekend, January 11). If it were simply butterflies and beetles versus landscape we should be able to choose sides according to our own priorities. The landscape lobby, however, has a real problem, because either policy, fencing or not fencing, will have visual implications.

The intrusion of a fence in landscape such as Stedham Common, Sussex, which you illustrate, really is visually damaging. Some 300 years ago our ancestors invented a technique for dealing with such impediment hazard, as I have termed it. It was the ha-ha, or sunken fence.

I do not suggest that the ha-ha is the solution for our present problem, but our ancestors would not have been prepared to go to the great expense of constructing such things if they had not been aware of the importance of retaining an impression, however illusory, of uninterrupted open space.

Yours faithfully,
JAY APPLETON (author,
The Experience of Landscape,
39 Hull Road,
Cottingham, East Yorkshire,
January 12.

Retreat from Kabul

From Mrs Lesley Wynne-Davies

Sir, Dr William Brydon was not the only survivor of the retreat from Kabul in 1842 (report, January 14).

For the last five years the Friends of the Public Record Office have been indexing documents of British soldiers discharged before 1854. In the course of this one of our volunteers, Mr A. W. Elliott, came upon the papers of John Marshall, who served in the 44th Regiment of Foot from 1838 to 1843.

His medical report on discharge, signed by J. Robertson, M.D., surgeon of the 13th Regiment, reads: "On the retreat of the Army from Cabool received a Gunshot wound in the wrist at the Khord Cabul pass and in the barrier at the Jugullock pass was wounded and slight and left exposed to the severe cold which was followed by rheumatism of a portion of the right foot and the loss of the toes of the left, by which he is rendered unfit for the duties of a soldier."

Not only did Marshall survive the retreat from Kabul, he also put in a claim for his back pay and clothing.

Yours faithfully,
LESLIE WYNNE-DAVIES
(Volunteers' Co-ordinator,
Friends of the Public Record Office),
Public Record Office,
Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Surrey,
January 14.

ter to our recent weather, but I have higher hopes of their cheese than of their meat, judging by my memories of the gastronomic qualities of their Malaysian cousins.

Yours etc.
TERENCE PARSONS,
31a Harrington Road,
Dorchester, Dorset,
January 13.

From Mr Peter Bayley

Sir, Before everyone gets too excited about the idea of farming water buffalo — endearing beasts — let it be said that no soldier who served in the Far East during the war will have any but the most dejected reaction to the idea. And I don't think it was army cooking that was chiefly responsible for those greasy, tough, intractable substances that only the brown kites, which snatched them from our tin plates as we carried them from the cooking-fires, seemed to like.

Yours sincerely,
P. C. BAYLEY,
63 Oxford Street,
Woodstock, Oxford,
January 13.

OBITUARIES

SIR PETER TENNANT

Sir Peter Tennant, CMG, OBE, diplomat and industrial spokesman, died on December 22 aged 86. He was born on November 29, 1910.

In the chaotic study of his home in Haslemere, Peter Tennant was, until shortly before death, busy trying to have a better wheelchair designed for the National Health Service, translating and editing the letters of Countess Amelia (née Masaryk's secretary and friend) and maintaining a vigorous correspondence, to say nothing of advising a think-tank in Oxford. None of this would have surprised his many friends — who would also agree about his ready wit, gifts as a raconteur and stentorian voice.

Brought up in his earliest years as a son of the Raj in India, Tennant was, according to the custom of the time, sent home to England when he was only four.

When, years later, he returned to Bombay and went to look for the house that had been the family home he found it hard to recognise. But then, already in his sixties and a tall, heavily-built man — he suddenly realised that his perspective had changed with the years. Without an ounce of self-consciousness he simply crouched on all fours and crawled along the pavement for a better look.

Peter Frank Dalrymple Tennant was educated at Marlborough whence he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he became the senior modern languages scholar in 1929. He took a first in the Modern Languages Tripos in 1931. Mastering French and German, he sought something more testing. He turned to the origins of the Germanic languages. He won scholarships to Oslo, Copenhagen and Stockholm universities. From 1934 to 1939 he taught Scandinavian languages at Cambridge, where he became a Fellow of Queens' College.

As war approached, he was recruited into the Special Operations Executive, initially involved with code-breaking at Bletchley, he moved from deciphering to propaganda. With a Swedish wife and familiar with Scandinavian life and languages, he was posted to Stockholm as the press attaché in the



British consulate. The house he lived in had belonged to Ingrid Bergman. Finding he could get to work from it by water, Tennant bought a canoe. But the Swedish authorities forbade him to use it because his route passed what they regarded as a militarily sensitive area. In an attempt to circumnavigate the ban, Tennant attached CD plates to his canoe.

Among his tasks in neutral Sweden was to tell the British story to persuade people that, in the end, Britain would win the war. He published his own newspaper, arranged talks, seminars and soirées, and brought numbers of prominent British writers to Sweden, T. S. Eliot among them.

Behind that diplomatic front he had other, more vital work. He developed a network of secret contacts in various fields, recruited an informant inside

the German Legation, exposed double agents and successfully planted deception plans. In a boat, *The Valkyrian*, he bought to sail in the quiet waters of Stockholm's archipelago, he both took visitors from Britain and, more noisily, tested explosives.

A gregarious, large-hearted man, Tennant made many friends. Among them was Alexandra Kollontai, the Soviet Ambassador. She said that the Soviet Union was interested in education and was impressed by the standards in Britain. She asked him for advice. As a result, a report went to the Comintern recommending the establishment of 60 Eltons in the Soviet Union, "though nothing came of it".

Despite being approved by Churchill, nothing came of a plan recommended by another contact. It was to buy the Italian Navy.

As soon as Paris was liberated, Tennant moved from Stockholm to become counsellor for information at the embassy there. Duff Cooper was his ambassador. Tennant, still ostensibly concerned with the press and other media, quickly realised that for years the French public had suffered too rich a diet of German or German-approved films. He arranged to introduce Allied films into French cinemas. But these could not just be put on without a charge. That would be unfair to those cinemas not given the opportunity to show them. Nevertheless, the scheme flourished.

Money started pouring into the British Embassy. The Foreign Office in London was horrified. Tennant was temporarily suspended. But all ended well. The money was used to buy the building next door, now the consulate. Tennant never passed it, he said later, without patting the wall.

In 1950 he was posted to Berlin as deputy commandant of the British Sector. One outcome was the Wilton Park conference, held each year so that British and German politicians could meet each other.

In 1952 he resigned from the Foreign Office and became overseas director of the Federation of British Industries. In 1963 he was promoted to become its deputy-director general and had hopes of becoming its director-general — hopes that were dashed by its merger with the British Employers Federation to form the CBI.

For six years, 1965-71, he was director-general of the British National Export Council. He was knighted in 1972; he had been appointed OBE in 1945 and CMG in 1958. He subsequently served as president and chairman of the London Chamber of Commerce. He was a director of Barclays Bank SA and industrial adviser to Barclays Bank International. From 1973 to 1980 he was a director of Prudential Assurance. He sat on the Council of Industrial Design (now the Design Council) and was acting chairman of the Wilton Park Academic Council.

Peter Tennant was twice married — first to his Swedish wife and then to a Finnish one. He is survived by the latter, Galina, whom he married in 1953, a stepson and one son and two daughters from his first marriage.

IAIN MILLS

Iain Mills, Conservative MP for Meriden since 1979, died yesterday aged 56. He was born on April 21, 1940.



IAIN MILLS was a typical product of the first Thatcher election victory of 1979. He was young in political terms, thrusting, right-wing but not extremist, with a good industrial record behind him and a determination to put trade unions in their place. He won the then marginal Meriden on a tough law and order platform.

In the Commons he proved a friend of the police. He called for better training for constables and more uniformed officers on the beat. He voted for the restoration of capital punishment and was keen on the plan to give vandals "short sharp shocks". It was, therefore, an embarrassment when he was found last April lying in a gutter in Great Smith Street, near the House of Commons. He spent four hours in the cells at Charing Cross police station before being released with an official warning for drunkenness — though he always maintained that he had slipped and fallen over through carrying too many books.

That was the only time he appeared on the front pages of newspapers. He was a reliable loyalist but the nearest he got to office was a six-year spell as parliamentary private secretary to Lord (then) Norman Tebbit.

Mills was born in Scotland but grew up in Rhodesia — now Zimbabwe — and was educated at Prince Edward's school in Salisbury and at the University of Cape Town.

He trained as a chemical engineer and returned to Britain to work for Dunlop, where he eventually became marketing planning manager. He was proud of his role in the designing of the tyres on which Jackie Stewart won the

world motor racing title. Understandably, in view of his background, he tended to concentrate on transport in the House. He was joint chairman of the Commons Motor Industry Group and also served on the Select Committee on Employment.

As a Midlands MP, with car workers in his constituency, he was against unrestricted Spanish car imports. He called for all methods "short of an actual blockade" until Spain reduced the quota of car exports to Britain. He declared, almost in an echo of his mentor Norman Tebbit: "I am all in favour of doing a French on them and insisting that all Spanish cars arriving in this country will be accepted only through somewhere nice and convenient like the Shetlands."

He was a noted campaigner for animal rights. He was against animals being used for laboratory experiments to make lipsticks and other cosmetics. He suggested it was more moral to use human beings in their place. Not entirely with his tongue in cheek, he sought to ban goldfish being given as fairground prizes. He also supported the Ramblers Association in its bid to modify the Wildlife and Countryside Bill. His other main interest was counterfeiting. He estimated that perhaps seven eighths of the counterfeiting was going undetected and added the volume of counterfeit products sold in Britain varied between £200 million and £500 million. He had been married since 1971 to Gaynor Jeffries, who survives him.

JANET RANCE

Janet Rance, journalist, died of cancer on December 18 aged 68. She was born on March 24, 1928.

FROM her mother, Jan Struher, Janet Rance inherited wisdom, zest and eloquence which made friends long to ring her up and ask advice about anything from how to deal with a crying baby ("ear-plugs") to how to write a book. As Janet Graham she was a journalist for 30 years, producing extensively researched articles on travel, art and architecture while bringing up seven children in a small house in Streatham in Berkshire.

An intrepid traveller with a taste for exoticism and variety, she explored the Iron Curtain countries posing as a housewife, managed to get a tax allowance for two contrasting sets of clothes when sent to write about Iceland and the Algerian Sahara and succeeded in selling hitch-hiking and

ballooning as "sports" to *Sports Illustrated*. Her mother was the rebellious and romantic author of *Mrs Miniver*; her father, Anthony Maxtone Graham, was a golfing laird whom Janet thought snobbish, conventional, extravagant and annoying. When in 1951 she became engaged to Patrick Rance, now well known for his definitive books on British and French cheese, her father made her postpone the wedding so that the rhododendrons along the drive in Perthshire would be at their best.

That was the kind of social nicety she could not stand. She loathed Scotland and decided it could only be of interest if you liked hitting balls or killing things. When she and Patrick (a monogamous ex-Regular Army major) started running the village shop in Streatham, her father and aunts were disapproving; it wasn't the done thing for a laird's daughter to marry a shopkeeper.



Janet and Pat Rance lived over the shop, in a house called Jessamine Cottage, which became known as Decibel Cottage because of the seven children. Over the years the house began to smell more and more strongly of cheese. The shop, Wells Stores, continued to be a general grocer's but little by little the baked beans and Selloape were

pushed aside to make more and more room for chèvre and Cornish yarg. The shop became a haven for cheese-lovers from all over the Thames Valley and beyond.

Janet Rance shut herself away while the children were at school and wrote her articles. She worked in what she called a "bach-lined room". Although she was too much of a questioner and a rebel to be a textbook Christian, she thought of Bach as a "hotline to heaven". She was such a Radio 3 addict that she used the *Radio Times* page as her diary, scribbling engagements on it in between concert programmes.

Her journalistic career began in America, where she had lived from 1940 to 1945 with her mother, who at that time was giving influential lectures and advising on the film of *Mrs Miniver* which, with Greer Garson in the title role, helped to bring America into the war. Aged 14, Janet was given a typewriter from

her mother as a reward when the *Atlantic Monthly* published her poem about air raids. Returning to New York in 1947, she became a secretary on *Good Housekeeping*, and from this humble post quickly made her way to be an assistant editor.

Her *Good Housekeeping* past was slightly difficult to imagine if one visited her: although an excellent cook, she was not much of a cleaner, and the stain experts at *Good Housekeeping* would have been brought up short if they had seen the surface of her stove. Though particular about the quality and temperature of cheese, she was far from being a wine or mineral-water snob: "It's Chateau Robinet this evening," guests would be told as she turned on the tap.

Wells Stores was taken over by a son, Hugh, but was sold during the recent recession. Her husband wrote his book on French cheese and this involved fascinating visits for the two of them to cheese-making monasteries all over France, where the standard of plainchant was judged just as strictly as the standard of cheese.

Janet Rance had her first five attacks of cancer 25 years ago. "Cancer is curable," she believed, and she became a source of consolation-by-example to friends who were suffering from it. She was, by nature, someone who liked to read in bed; and as the cancer gradually and inevitably returned, her bedside table became piled higher and higher with books and *Times Literary Supplements*. She was a great clipper and was forever cutting bits out of the papers to send to relatives and friends about their particular interests.

She is survived by her husband Patrick and by seven children.

TOWNES VAN ZANDT

Townes Van Zandt, singer and songwriter, died of a heart attack on January 1 aged 52. He was born on March 7, 1944.



KNOWN in musical circles as "the songwriter's songwriter", Townes Van Zandt was one of the most original writers of pathos-drenched songs in an overcrowded field. His own recordings did not sell in vast numbers, although he had a dedicated following, but the list of those who recorded his songs reads like a *Who's Who* of contemporary music, and his influence was powerful.

He made 15 albums over almost 30 years — including the ironically-titled *The Late, Great Townes Van Zandt* in 1974 — but was best known outside the music business for writing the songs *If I Needed You*, a hit for Emmylou Harris and Don Williams, and *Pancho and Lefty*, which Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard took into the charts. His fellow songwriter Steve Earle wrote on the sleeve notes of his 1987 album, *At The Window*: "Townes Van Zandt is the best songwriter in the whole world and I'll stand on Bob Dylan's coffee table in my cowboy boots and say that."

Born into an oil family in Fort Worth, Texas, Van Zandt led a migratory childhood which established a pattern for his unsettled life. After high school he went to a military academy for two years and then to the University of Colorado, but dropped out to pursue a career as a folk singer under the influence of Lightnin' Hopkins and, inevitably, Bob Dylan.

By 1966 he was playing in clubs and bars around Houston where he became part of what was almost a school of Texan singer-songwriters, including among others his lifelong friend Guy Clark. Jerry

Jeff Walker and Mickey Newbury. A string of albums followed, starting with *For The Sake Of The Song* in 1968 which set the tone for melancholic stories about characters from the backwoods down on their luck.

But success only really started to arrive for him in the early 1970s when the likes of Emmylou Harris began recording his songs. Among those who were to cite his work as an important influence were Neil Young, Lyle Lovett and Nanci Griffith.

His personal life was chaotic; he battled against illness, had a drinking problem and

always believed he would die young. Between 1978 and 1987 he released no recordings, although he had become more prolific again in recent years, and recorded an album, *No Deeper Blue*, in Ireland in 1995. His last performance in Britain was at the Borderline in London in December last year. He recently suffered a broken hip and was recovering from this when he had a heart attack at his former wife Jeanne's house near Nashville, Tennessee. His friend Guy Clark was visiting him when he died.

He is survived by a daughter and two sons.

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THE GAME OF BOULE

A SAD PLEASURE OF THE RIVIERA FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT, MONTEN
Boule is the game played chiefly in casinos on the Riviera where roulette is not permitted. It is a lugubrious game, the players being depressed by the knowledge that the odds are so overwhelmingly against them. That it finds players at all is amazing testimony to the human inability to resist any game of so-called chance. It is like roulette to the extent that it is played by betting on numbers, the better's fate being decided by a ball spinning on a wheel. It is unlike roulette in the fact that the odds in favour of the house are four times as great. Also, the ball is, so to speak, a lawn tennis ball instead of a golf ball. In place of the clean little ivory or ivory-like ball of roulette, which spins so gaily and goes with such a determined click into its little hole, the boule ball is a big, lolling, bladder-like thing, which wobbles indifferently about the board, slides into a hole, and slouches out again, loafs round, and selects

ON THIS DAY

January 17, 1921

Not too serious advice on gambling for the boulevardiers of the Riviera.

another roosting-place, sits there for a second, changes its foolish mind, and doddles off to the only hole on which nobody has bet, and there, after much invertebrate rocking and hesitation, it finally settles down. You can almost hear it sigh from sheer boredom with itself. At roulette there are 37 numbers to bet on, one of which — zero — is the perquisite of the house. The bank must in the long run win one bet in every 37 that are made. At boule the bank wins one bet in every nine. There are nine numbers on the table — 1 to 9 — and one of these (5) is in effect zero. If you bet on a

single number and win you are paid seven times your stake instead of eight, the odds being 1 in 9 against you. So with every combination on the table, one-ninth of all the stakes goes infallibly to the house. Compared with that, the one-thirty-seventh, which is all the house takes at roulette, borders on the philanthropic. Of course, with a run of luck the individual may for a short time win at boule. I have done it myself; and a few days ago a party of six went to play for half an hour after lunch. At the end of the time one lady had won 60f and one man 40f. The net loss of the party of six was 105f; which was probably as happy a result as any party of six could expect to attain at boule. At least it can be said of boule that it probably never drove a man to suicide. He might lose his temper so as to speak impolitely to his wife or lose his appetite for tea. That is as far as it could go. It is one of the sadder pleasures of the gay Riviera — as impassioned as a cold mullin. As between boule and spillikins, for mad excitement give me spillikins.

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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

FRIDAY JANUARY 17 1997



Lord Harris of Peckham leading John Kitching, managing director, and Ian Sneyd, finance director, yesterday as Carpetright unveiled higher profits

Harris raises £23m in stake sale

By Sarah Connors

LORD HARRIS of Peckham, chairman and chief executive of Carpetright, raised £23 million yesterday by selling four million of his shares in the carpet retailer. He plans to spend most of the money on works of art, which — unlike cash — he will be able to pass on to his four children free of inheritance tax.

Lord Harris, 54, has a collection of about 400 paintings, including works by Steiner, Picasso and modern British painters.

The share sale coincided with the announcement that Carpetright made a profit in the six months to October 26 of £13.96 million, 38 per cent up on last year. The interim dividend rises by 2p, to 7.5p, due on February 21. Earnings per share were 12.1p, up from 8.7p. The figures, better than expected, lifted Carpetright shares 7p, to 99p. The company now claims 17 per cent of the market.

Lord Harris retains 15.2 per cent of Carpetright, and shares held by the family take the stake nearer 20 per cent. He has undertaken not to sell any more shares for two years.

Some proceeds of Lord Harris's share sale will go to his charitable trust, which supports education and health causes. He did not rule out some funds going to the Conservative Party, of which he is deputy treasurer.

Lord Harris has four children. Two sons, Martin, 27, and Peter, 34, work for Carpetright. His other son, Charles, is Peter's twin, and he has a daughter, Susan, 35.

Lord Harris prefers to buy art anonymously, through third parties, and lends most of his pictures to museums. He now plans to add to his silver and antique furniture collections, but says that he will not buy rugs, about which he claims to know nothing.

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ScotAm in £3,000 payout bonanza

By Marianne Curphey, Insurance Correspondent

MORE than one million policyholders with Scottish Amicable will share in bonuses worth up to £3,000 after it announced plans to demutualise and float within three to five years.

ScotAm said yesterday that shedding its mutual status was the first step in a two-stage restructuring. It will pay an initial special bonus of £75 million to members, followed by further benefits at flotation worth at least £200 million.

New with-profit policies taken out after December 31, 1996 and before the date of a special general meeting in March will qualify, but only for the bonuses at flotation, and not at demutualisation, which is scheduled for May 1.

However, policies taken out in 1972 on a sum assured of £30,000, for example, could qualify for more than £1,500.

ScotAm is currently the UK's sixth largest mutual life assurance company and sells life, protection, pensions, savings and investment products, primarily through independent financial advisers.

The insurer gave warning that "bonny hunters" — people intending to buy policies just to qualify for the special bonus — were not welcome. Anyone buying a second-hand policy will qualify for both bonuses.

However, unlike the demutualisations of building societies, members will not be able to access their bonus until the policy matures. For some, this will be more than 20 years away even though their bonus will be credited in May. Holders of non-profit policies will not qualify.

Paul Bradshaw, deputy managing director, said he expected the company to be worth £1 billion when it was floated and the restructuring would release hidden value worth at least £200 million.

However, analysts suggested that the Stirling-based mutual was such an attractive target to predators that it would be approached by banks and building societies looking to expand their life business. A successful bid would affect the size of the second bonus.

Another life insurer, Norwich Union, plans to demutualise in June and give each member an average £800 worth of shares. It has slightly less spare cash than ScotAm.

ScotAm said that the initial bonus would be based on the length of time that policies had been held. Policyholders will be asked to vote on demutualisation plans at the special general meeting in March.

Swiss Re, the giant reinsurer, and its affiliate, Securitas Capital, is backing the deal with £400 million of capital.

There has been intense speculation that ScotAm, founded in 1826, would be the subject of a takeover, but Sandy Stewart, the chairman, said that the group intended to hold on to its independence.

The demutualisation process is highly complicated and the business, staff and operations, and long-term fund of the group, will be transferred to a new company, Scottish Amicable Life, a 100 per cent-owned subsidiary of a newly formed holding company, Scottish Amicable Holdings.

Roy Nicolson, managing director of ScotAm, will become its group chief executive, and Mr Bradshaw will become chief executive of Scottish Amicable Life.

Float flurry prompts upgrade for Crest

By Jason Nisbet

THE computer capacity of Crest, the electronic share settlement system, is to be increased 60 per cent to handle this year's building society flotations and the introduction of other big stocks (Adam Jones writes).

Although 1,289 securities are now settled on Crest, several companies with large shareholder bases are still to be transferred.

They include the building societies planning to go public and stocks such as BT and Barclays, whose Crest debuts had to be rescheduled because of problems with the system last year. Eventually, 2,800 to 3,000 securities will be handled.

CrestCo, the operator of Crest, said that it would lease six new processors to cope with the increased demand this year and was considering other hardware upgrades. The improvements could lead to higher tariffs.

Paul Symons, of CrestCo, said that 80 per cent of trades were now settled on the intended date.

Newcastle to show losses of £17m

By Jason Nisbet

NEWCASTLE UNITED is to show losses of about £17 million for the year to July 31 when it publishes its prospectus for its spring flotation, which will value the Premier League club at between £160 million and £200 million.

The club yesterday said it will raise between £40 million and £50 million in the float.

A tenth of the shares will be reserved for small investors, with priority allocations for employees and season ticket holders. Mark Corbridge, the joint chief executive, said the money would be used to restructure Newcastle's balance sheet and it may return to the market to raise money to pay for building its £65 million new stadium at Castle Leazes.

Sir John Hall will keep a 60 per cent stake but will not be on the board of the company being floated. It will bring in three new non-executives including a chairman, while Sir John will chair the football club subsidiary. The club said that in the most recent financial year it had made operating profits of £5.9 million before player transfers. According to Football Association records, the team spent £28.5 million on players in the year and sold players worth £5.85 million, indicating a loss of £17 million.

Jo Dixon, Newcastle's finance director, said the company would write off all player deals when incurred.

Hall: football subsidiary

Pennington, page 25

Ford cuts jobs as Siemens expands

By Christine Buckley and Oliver August

FORD yesterday wielded the axe at its Halewood plant, cutting 1,300 jobs and scaling production of the Escort. But while unions were preparing to fight the job cuts — which will reduce Halewood's workforce by a third — Siemens, the German electronics group, announced plans to create 7,000 jobs in Britain by the millennium.

The Siemens plans will be seen as a triumph by workers stunned at the news of the Halewood job cuts and cut in working time. Ford chose to halt manufacture of the Escort at Halewood while maintaining output of the model at a German plant where production costs are greater. Labour and the unions have blamed Britain's employment flexibility for an easy come, easy go opportunity for companies. Germany enforces tough labour laws requiring long periods of consultation before companies can sack workers.

Unions at Halewood are seeking urgent talks with Jac Nasser, the chairman of Ford Europe, in an effort to halt the restructuring, which they have condemned as a "suspended death sentence". Strike action at the 33-year-old Merseyside plant is possible. Ford said the upheaval at Halewood was essential to its European operations. They made a loss of £279 million in the third quarter of last year.

Siemens, meanwhile, set out an ambitious wish list for its UK operations, fuelled, it said, by Britain's flexible workforce. Jürgen Gehrels, chief executive, said: "We may one day run the M25 motorway." Siemens, the producer of the new BT phone cards, wants to expand its activities using the Government's private finance initiative for public building works.

Herr Gehrels said he was sorry to see Ford's problems, but he emphasised that the UK was nevertheless a better place to invest than Germany because of its lower cost base and more flexible workforce.

The redundancy programme at Halewood starts immediately, with workers soon to be told of "enhanced" severance terms. The plant moves from a two-shift operation to one shift in April. Production of the Escort stops in the year 2000.

Strong pound allows Clarke to leave rates unchanged

By Janet Bush, Economics Editor

KENNETH CLARKE said that sterling's strength was the main reason why he has decided to leave interest rates unchanged at 6 per cent for the time being.

On the day after he met Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, for their monthly meeting on rates, the Chancellor said that the pound's sharp rise robs British exporters of the value of what they are selling. "It distorts our trade, but it is very counter-inflationary," he said.

The Chancellor's view that the strength of sterling will bear down on inflation gained immediate support from Government statisticians who attributed yesterday's news of falling high street inflation in December partly to the pound.

The combination of lower inflation and unchanged interest rates gave a strong boost to shares and British government bonds, although many economists believe that rates will rise next month. The FTSE 100 index closed at a new record, up 38.6 points at 4,197.5, while gilt prices were up by three quarters of a point.

The annual rate of retail prices headline inflation fell to 2.5 per cent from 2.7 per cent in November. Underlying inflation, which excludes mortgage interest payments, dropped to 3.1 per cent from 3.3 per cent. This was this measure's first monthly fall since May last year, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Statisticians said that these falls, both larger than the City expected, could be attributed to tight competitive pressures on Britain's high streets and the effect of sterling's strong appreciation, particularly since August.

One example of the effect of the pound was falling prices in December for audio-visual equipment, such as videos and televisions, and photographic equipment, much of which is still imported.

But there were also price falls for toys, for example. This may reflect sterling's impact on imported prices, but it may also be a sign that consumers were insistent on searching for bargains. Given anecdotal evidence that the Christmas shopping season got off to a slow start — John Menzies, the newsagents and retail group, yesterday became the latest company to report disappointing business — it would appear that retailers have had to be keenly competitive on price.

There was a rash of pre-Christmas sales, with heavy discounting of some non-seasonal foods, the prices of which fell for the fourth consecutive month. ONS statisticians said that there was evidence that fierce price competition in supermarket chains continued this month.

The fall in the annual headline rate of inflation was largely because of motorway costs and food prices. Petrol prices increased less sharply than they had after the 1995 Budget, and second-hand car prices fell more steeply than they did last year. Seasonal food prices didn't rise by nearly as much as a year ago. Equifax Europe reports today that more consumer credit accounts were paid on time in the final three months of last year than in any period over the past year. This, the firm said, confirmed that what it called the "recent consumer credit boom" was based on affordability rather than rash spending.

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BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES		
FTSE 100	4197.5	(+38.6)
Yield	3.71%	
FTSE All Share	2055.26	(+15.10)
Nikkei	18144.34	(+51.21)
New York		
Dow Jones	8758.44	(+31.50)
S&P Composite	789.53	(+2.70)
US RATE		
Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	8.02%	(8 1/8%)
Yield	6.81%	(6.75%)
LONDON MONEY		
3-month Interbank	6 1/4%	(6 1/4%)
Libor 3m	11 1/4%	(10 3/4%)
STERLING		
New York	1.5767	(1.5825)
London		
£	1.5782	(1.5850)
DM	2.8675	(2.8603)
FF	1.2768	(1.2705)
SP	2.3040	(2.2977)
Yen	195.06	(195.05)
£ Index	99.1	(99.9)
DOLLAR		
London		
DM	1.5880	(1.5880)
FF	1.3819	(1.3775)
SP	1.2768	(1.2705)
Yen	116.54	(116.87)
£ Index	99.1	(99.9)
Tokyo close Yen	116.90	
NORTH SEA OIL		
Brent 15-day (Mar)	£23.26	(£23.66)
GOLD		
London close	£383.35	(£384.15)
* denotes midday trading price		

Making tracks

The rail regulator has warned Railtrack that it must step up investment in the railways or face severe financial penalties. John Swift, the regulator, said current spending was "wholly unacceptable".

Snowballing

First Leisure has earmarked £100 million for expansion that will create 2,000 jobs over two years. The plans include building two new snowdromes — indoor skiing centres.

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Railtrack told to step up investment

By JONATHAN PRYNN, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

THE Rail Regulator has issued Railtrack with its starkest warning yet that it must dramatically step up its level of investment in the railways or face severe financial penalties.

In a toughly worded statement to the company's board, Joan Swift, the regulator, said current spending was "wholly unacceptable" and that its stewardship of the railways was "disappointing in important aspects".

Mr Swift accused the company, which was privatised in May last year, of heavily underspending on track, signalling and stations. The total shortfall has been estimated at between £333 million and £700 million.

He called on Railtrack to deliver "an effective rail infrastructure renewal and investment programme in line with public interest objectives and with the basis on which Railtrack's access charges received regulatory approval".

Railtrack must show that it has "credible plans to deal with the backlog and should deliver on those plans, now that it is free from public sector financing limits," he said.

The rail industry's financial

regime had been set at a level to allow for infrastructure improvements of £3.5 billion up to 2001, he added.

Railtrack is financed mainly from track access charges that it levies the train operating companies, which receive about £2 billion of taxpayer subsidy a year.

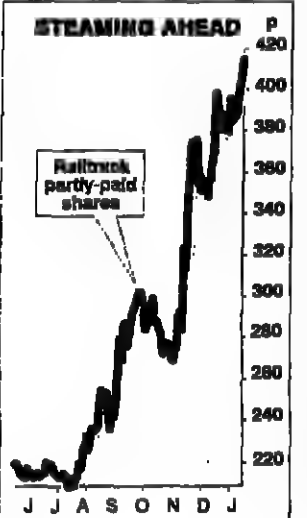
Andrew Smith, the Shadow Transport Secretary, said it was "intolerable" that a company receiving such a large public subsidy should be failing to invest in infrastructure. He urged the regulator to follow up his warning with "strong action to ensure Railtrack complies".

In a statement, Railtrack acknowledged the spending arrears, but said it was taking time to build up investment levels to meet "our ambitious plans". The company is due to publish its Network Management Statement next month, when it will be expected to reveal in some detail how it plans to invest in the network over the next decade.

Railtrack insisted that it planned to spend £8 billion by the time of the Regulator's next review of the financial regime in 2001. Mr Swift can cap the charges or even fine the company if it does not meet investment targets.

Railtrack shares, which have climbed rapidly since they were floated at 190p last year, touched a new record high of 411p yesterday, despite the shot across the company's bows from Mr Swift.

Foreign investors have piled into the shares since the flotation, in part because of the development potential of its vast property assets. Analysts pointed to a shortage of shares in the market because about 38 per cent are still held by the public. This makes it difficult for institutions to build up their portfolio "weightings" in Railtrack shares, which are in the FT-SE 100 index, forcing up the price.



Jon Richard, Anite chief executive, who is confident of increasing profit margins

Anite sale of Case interests lifts shares

By ERIC REGULY

ANITE GROUP completed its restructuring yesterday with the £42 million sale of the loss-making divisions that make data communications products. The disposals triggered a 6½p rise in the shares, which closed at 47p.

The company, formerly Cray Electronics, sold Case Technology Denmark and Case Technology UK so that it could concentrate on Anite Systems and Anite Networks, whose specialities are software and network integration.

The former was sold to Intel Europe, which makes computer chips; the latter went to Niteband, a new private company that was formed by Roger Holland, the former chairman of Anite, for the nominal sum of £1.

The two Case operations had net losses of £23 million in the last financial year.

Anite Systems reported interim profits of £28 million on turnover of £39 million, while Anite Networks was only marginally profitable on sales of £38 million.

Jon Richards, chief executive, said that the profit margins of Anite Networks should reach 5 per cent within a couple of years.

In the half year to October 31, Anite reported a pre-tax loss of £63.5 million, which includes a surplus property writedown of £21.9 million, against a previous loss of £14.6 million.

The company said that the disposals leave it with £17 million in cash. The board will consider paying a final dividend in July.

Woolwich in float shares muddle

By CAROLINE MERRELL

THE Woolwich Building Society has admitted that 55,000 people have been sent the wrong information about whether they qualify for shares in its £3 billion stock market flotation planned for July.

The building society sent out two mailshots to its 2.5 million members — one

before December 31, 1996, and one at the beginning of this year.

The society said that some of the 55,000 had altered their accounts in some way in the weeks before the end of the year, which meant that some were no longer eligible for the free shares, while others had changed their accounts to ensure they qualified.

For instance, some may have allowed their accounts to fall below the critical £100 level by the end of the year, thus cutting themselves out of the share bonanza worth an average of £1,200.

Others who did not qualify for the share-out before the year-end rushed to top up their accounts.

The Woolwich said that 12,000 had topped up accounts at the last possible moment, which meant that the cheques did not clear until the first week in the new year.

Also affected are those who have recently moved house and have their previous address on one account and the new address on another.

In spite of a de-duplication exercise carried out by the building society some people may find that they receive two separate voting packs.

L&G's new business up by half

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

LEGAL & GENERAL, the insurer, saw new business surge 54 per cent in 1996, its first rise in three years.

Equivalent premium income, which measures annual premiums and one tenth of single premiums, reached £301 million in the UK.

David Prosser, chief executive, said the growth demonstrated recovery in the market and L&G's strategy of providing good-value products through a range of channels.

Overseas business fell £35 million, to £85.4 million, hit by sterling's strength and reorganisation of the US subsidiaries, William Penn and Banner.

At home, the improving housing market pushed mortgage repayment products up 43 per cent, to £75.2 million.

L&G was also successful in group personal pensions, with sales of annuities quadrupling to £724.6 million, making it a market leader. Individual pension single premiums rose 26 per cent, to £228.2 million.

Pep and unit trust sales rose £28.3 million, to £205.7 million, and L&G won 200 mandates to manage £4.25 billion of new pension fund money.

L&G is to announce final results and bonuses for with-profit holders in March.

London goal for Italian football club

By JASON NISSE

JUVENTUS, the Turin football club that won last season's European Cup, may become the first foreign club to take a listing on the London stock market.

The club, which is controlled by the Agnelli family of Fiat fame, will take the London listing because its profit record is not good enough to be listed on the Italian market.

Under Italian rules, companies must show three uninterrupted years of profits before being able to list on the Milan stock market.

Juventus made a loss in its last financial year.

Italian press reports suggest that the Agnelli family is to restructure its controlling shareholding in Juventus to bring it to market. Other clubs in Serie A, the Italian first division, believed to be considering a share listing include AC Milan, Inter Milan and Lazio.

Sergio Cragnotti, the owner of Lazio, yesterday said: "We want to be the first club to get the official quotation. We were looking forward to a quick quotation... we have been dealing with Consob [Italy's stock exchange regulatory agency] for this purpose."

US reviews Boeing's McDonnell merger

AMERICA'S Federal Trade Commission is to review the merger of Boeing and McDonnell Douglas, Janet Reno, the Attorney-General, said yesterday. European Union antitrust investigators also have announced that they intend to review the merger to ensure that it complies with EU rules.

Boeing's \$13.34 billion takeover of McDonnell Douglas, announced last month, would create a civilian-aircraft and military-aircraft powerhouse with projected annual revenue of \$48 billion, making it the world's largest aerospace company. It would have 65 per cent of the world jetliner market, almost double the share of Europe's Airbus Industrie consortium, its main rival. In America, both the FTC and the Justice Department have jurisdiction to review mergers. They negotiate to decide which will handle each merger and often both agencies are interested in handling large, high-profile mergers. The decision is usually based on which agency has more expertise with the industry involved.

Brokers to merge

LOWNDES LAMBERT and Fenchurch, the insurance brokers, are to merge, forming a new company, the Lambert Fenchurch Group, with a stock market value of about £95 million. Fenchurch shareholders will be offered 628 new Lambert Fenchurch shares for every 1,000 Fenchurch shares. The merger is expected to save at least £5 million before tax. Lowndes Lambert shareholders will hold about 72 per cent in the new group and Fenchurch shareholders 28 per cent.

Mercedes chief goes

HELMUT WERNER yesterday resigned as chairman of Mercedes-Benz after a bitter struggle over the restructuring of Daimler-Benz, its parent company. Herr Werner had opened plans that legally wind up Mercedes and make it part of Daimler. According to the restructuring plans, Mercedes will cease to be an independent legal entity and will become part of Daimler-Benz, represented on the board by three executives, one for cars, one for trucks and one for marketing.

Scots defend banknotes

SCOTTISH banks have banded together to ensure the survival of Scotland's own banknotes should the UK Government decide to participate in European monetary union. Lord Younger of Prestwick, chairman of the Royal Bank of Scotland and a former minister, told its annual meeting in Edinburgh yesterday, that "the Scottish banks have discussed the prospects for their own note issue with the Bank of England and the European Monetary Institute".

Lanica shares fall 10%

SHARES in Lanica Trust yesterday closed 10 per cent down, at £13.87, after a low of £9.37. The fall followed a statement after the close of trading on Wednesday that ended speculation that Andrew Regan, the chief executive, was about to pull off a spectacular deal. Early this month, the shares, which were £2 last year, rose above £20 on rumours that Littlewoods intended to back its retail business into Lanica to gain a stock market listing. Lanica says it intends to stay an investment company.

Pearson chief buys

MARJORIE SCARDINO, the new chief executive of Pearson, bought 10,000 shares in the media and entertainment group at £7.76 each yesterday. John Mackinson, finance director, bought 2,000 shares at the same price, raising his holding to 3,000 shares. The purchases came on the back of "buy" recommendations from Merrill Lynch and NatWest Securities, which expect Ms Scardino to focus the company by selling some investments. Pearson shares rose 2½p to 780½p.

Triplex bid go-ahead

TRIPLEX LLOYD'S £58 million hostile bid for William Cook, its fellow engineer, is back on course after a Department of Trade and Industry decision not to refer it to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. The bid — suspended while the DTI made up its mind — will now be decided by February 8. William Cook responded by challenging Triplex to issue a profit forecast. Triplex said that it had no intention of doing so, and that the City was well-informed about its prospects.

Brooke better

BROOKE Industrial Holdings, the manufacturer and distributor of cutting tools, is increasing its total dividend to 3p a share, from 2p, with a 2p final after reporting pre-tax profits of £576,000 for the year to September 30, up from £410,000 in the previous 12 months. Earnings rose to 1.56p a share, from 1.1p. Turnover of £21.78 million compared with £18.9 million previously. The company raised £4.3 million through a rights issue in October, to reduce borrowings.

Digital Equipment dives

DIGITAL EQUIPMENT, the US computer manufacturer, reported second-quarter net income almost 80 per cent lower, at \$31.9 million, compared with \$148.8 million last time. Earnings per share fell to 15 cents from 91 cents. However, the results beat Wall Street's expectations, and the shares surged. Digital's stock rose \$3.50, or more than 10 per cent. Robert Palmer, chairman, said: "I am satisfied with the progress the company demonstrated in the second quarter."

Speciality Shops buys

SPECIALITY SHOPS, the retail property investment company, is to acquire the Pyramids shopping centre in Birkhead from Wyndham Investments, the property arm of the Allied Domecq pension fund, for £26.75 million. The centre, completed in 1988, has 143,000 sq ft of retail space. Speciality Shops said that its gross assets more than doubled to £110 million in 1996, while net asset value per share rose to at least 145p from 134p.

Plan for petition opposing South Bank move

Deflation sets in at Treasury

By MORAG PRESTON

TREASURY morale plummeted new depths yesterday after it was confirmed that mandarins will be moving to less prestigious premises near Vauxhall Bridge in London for three years while its Whitehall headquarters are refurbished.

There is already talk of pressuring the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, with a petition objecting to the move to Camelford House, nicknamed the "Spook Centre", on the South Bank, at the end of 1998. "It's a bit of the first order," muttered one complaint. "The only local facilities are a chip shop, a gay bar and a strip joint."

Around 200 staff from the Treasury's state-of-the-art offices in Victoria, who will eventually return to share reduced Whitehall headquarters with its former inmates, are said to be particularly put out by the move. Parking facilities and the length of time it will take ministers in a hurry to reach Parliament are other major sticking points.

Responding to a parliamentary question yesterday the Treasury said: "There are firm plans to improve the area, including access to public transport, road improvements and general cleanliness."

The contract to refurbish the Treasury has been awarded to the architect, Sir Norman Foster, and the programme will be undertaken as a Private Finance Initiative. When complete it is likely the rear of the building will house residential flats, with the Treasury in the middle and another government department at the front, which will deny the Treasury its door on to Whitehall.

	Bank	Bank	Bank
	Days	Days	Days
Australia \$	2.28	2.10	2.10
Austria Sch	13.71	13.71	13.71
Belgium Fr	57.82	57.82	57.82
Canada C\$	2.28	2.20	2.20
Cyprus Cyp£	0.891	0.891	0.891
Denmark Kr	10.72	10.72	10.72
Finland Mk\$	8.88	8.88	8.88
France Fr	6.77	6.77	6.77
Germany Dm	2.92	2.92	2.92
Greece Dr	244	244	244
Hong Kong \$	18.83	18.83	18.83
Indonesia Rp	1,377	1,377	1,377
Israel Shk	6.77	6.77	6.77
Italy Lira	2,036	2,036	2,036
Japan Yen	160.37	160.37	160.37
Netherlands Gld	3.60	3.60	3.60
New Zealand \$	2.25	2.25	2.25
Norway Kr	11.19	11.19	11.19
Portugal Esc	200.48	200.48	200.48
Spain Ptas	166.64	166.64	166.64
Sweden Kr	10.36	10.36	10.36
Switzerland Fr	2.60	2.60	2.60
Turkey Lira	1,800.00	1,800.00	1,800.00
USA \$	1.00	1.00	1.00

Rates for aural demarcation, based on rates only as reflected by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates for aural demarcation, based on rates only as reflected by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates for aural demarcation, based on rates only as reflected by Barclays Bank PLC.

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□ Why the feeling is not mutual at ScotAm □ Newcastle's flotation out of Toon □ Lord Harris makes an honest pile

Amicable, but hardly user-friendly

INSURANCE analysts are a clever breed. At least one must suppose so, to those outside insurance the subject is a complete enigma anyway. Yet even the rocket scientists on the research desks at the big securities houses were blenching and calling for strong coffee when Scottish Amicable's plans for a stock market float sailed into view.

It was not so much the sheer, mind-boggling complexity of it all. It was why it had to be so mind-bogglingly complex, when there were plenty of simpler ways to achieve the same ends. (Deep breath). Let us try to put it simply.

Scottish Amicable, a well-regarded but unexciting runner in the mutual insurance pack founded in 1826, is bringing in some heavy friends from elsewhere to pep up its performance in the three to five years before the business achieves a stock market quotation. A raft of institutional investors and vulnerability to a takeover bid.

Drop the thing into the market as it is and it would survive about as long as a goldfish in a piranha pond. What is more, the splash would be muted because of the five other demutualisations expected this year. Fatten it up for three to five years, with the help of those heavy friends, Swiss Re and its associate Securitas Capital, and in-

roduce a more profits-driven culture and the returns to the owners, the with-profits policyholders, will be greater.

Once ScotAm demutualises in the spring, the existing business is closed off and all new policies written thereafter go into a New Fund. Securitas takes 20 per cent of this, in return for an investment of up to £45 million. Swiss Re has a matching stake in the entire group, old and new funds and the rest, in return for £350 million plus perhaps another £150 million in a couple of years.

This first payment funds a one-off bonus to those policyholders, who control the other 80 per cent and can be relied on to ignore all but the most tempting takeover approaches, of which ScotAm has had a few.

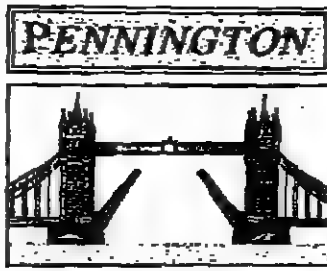
This bonus goes into their existing policies to enhance terminal bonuses. On flotation, shares in a group worth £1 billion are sold to the City. Those policyholders take out perhaps £200 million in a one-off payment, enough to retain to fund future business and the rest is Swiss Re's return on its money. ScotAm believes the scheme

allows policyholders to benefit from any upturn in the insurance cycle and rises in premiums already detected, along with further gains in market share by independent financial advisers, to whom it is one of the leading suppliers. The pledge is to quadruple profits on the road to flotation.

This can be taken as an admission that improvement is overdue. ScotAm's market share may have grown in 1995, the last year on record, but it is still a modest 2.7 per cent of all life premiums — and the other fish in that pond are getting bigger and meaner.

More followers than profits

LET us all now bow down to the great god Football. Despite the hiccup caused by replacing Messiah Kevin with King Kenny, the Newcastle United flotation trudges on without deflection. A new chairman will preside over the float, while Sir John Hall, the architect of the revived Toon, will not even sit on



the public company's board. Given the near-universal worship of the Football god, the issue is bound to go well. Loyal Geordies will queue round the block. Supposedly sensible fund managers will don replica team shirts in order to hobnob with former footballers. But once the excitement subsides, there will be some serious losses to nurse. Ignoring Newcastle, Coventry and all the other clubs saying they intend to float, and merely concentrating on the 19 clubs traded — be they on the main market, AIM, Olex or in matched bargains — the football sector already has a market capitalisation of more than £2 billion. There are substantial engineers, with boring things like

factories, export markets and profits, worth less. The best estimates of annual revenues from pay-per-view TV for football are £2.5 billion. After the cut taken by the broadcasters and spiralling player salaries, the amount left for the shareholders is bound to disappoint.

And then there is the issue of management. Until now, most clubs have been run as a hobby rather than as proper businesses. Newcastle has drafted in a new management team, but Sir John will hover in the background with a controlling interest. This is the structure enjoyed by Tottenham Hotspur when Paul Boboff ran the company and Irving Scholar the club. The result: near insolvency and stock exchange censure.

Newcastle has not made a profit during Sir John's reign, surviving only because he guaranteed its mountain of loans from Barclays Bank. In the prospects the company will admit to having lost £17 million last year and forecast no profit this year. It may have a brilliant manager, adoring fans and a unique place in the community, but Newcastle's stock market aspirations require the sort of faith that even a Messiah could not inspire.

A measured tread to this carpet sale

THERE is something unnerving about a business that is largely the creation of one entrepreneur. Any sign of waning confidence on their part is a good time to join them in the gradual, unobtrusive drift towards the exits, which is why directors' dealings and, in particular, the sale of a large chunk of the main man's holdings, should be of concern to investors.

Lord Harris's decision to sell a quarter of his holding in his Carpetright creation looks to be the exception, though. The sale might serve as a model for such transactions. He has made no significant disposals since the company was floated in 1993, despite the lifting of a self-imposed block on such share sales a year later. The market was informed of his intentions beforehand, and the sale carried

out in an orderly fashion to institutions. He has an excellent reason for wanting to sell, even if \$4 is hopefully a good few decades too early to start worrying about death duties.

There is no parallel with the collapse of Lowndes Queensway in 1990, two years after he sold out. His family retains a fifth of the company, and Carpetright is determined to stay out of debt. Little wonder that the City was queuing up for the shares.

Lord Harris is one of the nicer businessmen it is possible to meet, and plenty have reason to be thankful for his charitable work. No one is perfect, though, and he has one known character defect: it is impossible to remain in his company for long before he tries to sell you a carpet.

Aerial view of 5

IT IS not strictly accurate to say that up to three million households will need expensive new aerials because of the arrival of Channel 5. They need only put up the money if they intend to receive the station. We also learn this week that a *sine qua non* of working there, based on a quiz put to some job applicants, is the ability to name all five of the Spice Girls. Might a few of those householders decide the cultural riches on offer are not worth the extra expense?

Lonrho chief says Bock sale has hit demerger

BY PAUL DURMAN

THE new chief executive of Lonrho, the conglomerate with extensive interests in Africa, admitted yesterday that his predecessor's sale of an 18.3 per cent stake to Anglo-American, the South African mining group, had made it more difficult for him to deliver value to Lonrho's shareholders.

Nick Morrell, who recently succeeded Dieter Bock, said Anglo-American's acquisition of Mr Bock's stake had "added to the complexities" of Lonrho's planned demerger of its mining and non-mining businesses. The European Commission is investigating Anglo's purchase, because of concern that it may give the company undue influence in the world platinum market.

Mr Morrell said the inquiry will probably run until May.

Lonrho was reporting annual profits before exceptional items of £170 million, a 13 per cent improvement on the previous year.

Mr Bock's October sale via an option at 180p prompted a collapse in Lonrho's shares, although yesterday they rose 2p to 127p. However, Mr Morrell defended Mr Bock's continuing role as non-executive chairman. "We felt he had a following in the market," he said. Mr Bock is also closely involved with the Amantayau Goldfields project in Uzbekistan. Mr Morrell said Mr Bock's critics forgot that he had underwritten a share issue at a premium to the then market price in 1993.

Mr Morrell could give no indication as to the likely timetable of the demerger, although he recognised that shareholders would be unhappy if no progress had been made in a year's time. Lonrho will consider trade sales of its businesses if that will produce a better deal for shareholders.

Mr Morrell was otherwise unwilling to give further details of the likely shape of the demerger. He said the company was in discussions with various authorities around the world to determine the most tax efficient structure.

Lonrho wants to cut its debt of £494 million by about £200 million before the demerger. However, the company said it would not be rushed into a sale of its Princess Hotels

chain, and was determined to obtain the best price. Lonrho is believed to be discussing selling the hotels, which are expected to fetch about £300 million, to Prince Alwaleed bin Talal bin Abdulaziz, the Saudi businessman.

An £87 million charge on the pre-Christmas sale of the Metropole Hotels to Stakis left pre-tax profits at £78 million (£161 million). Mining profits fell £13 million to £90 million because of low mineral prices and the devaluation of the South African rand.

Adjusted earnings rose 34 per cent to 11.9p a share. Lonrho will pay a final dividend of 3p on April 7, giving an unchanged total of 5.25p.

Tempos, page 26

Clyde cashflow enjoys 29% lift

BY CARL MORTISHED

CLYDE PETROLEUM, the oil company fighting off a bid from Gulf Canada, impressed the market yesterday, reporting a strong boost to its cashflow in the year just ended.

At the same time, the oil company predicted that average daily oil production would rise sharply from 41,117 to 60,000 barrels in 1997.

Clyde shares rose from 177p to 121p as the market absorbed the implications for the company's cashflow. The oil company has been waging a battle over the correct method to value the company, arguing that on the basis of multiples of cashflow, Gulf's bid of 105p per share underestimates Clyde. Gulf has stated that net asset values are a more appropriate measure.

Malcolm Gourlay, chairman of Clyde, said that the

company would soon produce a valuation of the company's reserves and full figures for 1996, including the dividend.

Increased production and lower debt levels helped to boost cashflow by 29 per cent, to £127 million, the company estimated. Discretionary cashflow after deducting tax and interest rose by 37 per cent, to £113 million, or 27.6p per share.

In a document sent to shareholders yesterday, Clyde refers to a report from John Herold, the American consultants who state that Clyde should be valued at a multiple of 5.3 to 6.6 times discretionary cashflow. The calculation suggests a valuation of 146p to 177p per share. This valuation was rejected yesterday by Gulf Canada.

Tempos, page 26

Shell seeks move into electricity

BY CARL MORTISHED

SHELL, the Anglo-Dutch oil group, wants to build up a significant position in world electricity markets. Cor Herkströter, the chairman of Royal Dutch Petroleum and head of the committee of managing directors for the Shell group, said yesterday that the oil company intended to make substantial investments to develop a global electricity business from Shell's gas and coal reserves.

"We want to get into electricity generation. If we have not made substantial progress in five years we will not go ahead with it," he predicted.

Shell already has projects to develop electricity generation in the Philippines and in Namibia. Mr Herkströter did not rule out acquisitions to build up a power supply business but said there were

no bids planned at present. The oil company sees the opportunity of linking the production of gas and coal to the electricity power point in the home. "We would not exclude being part of the whole supply chain," said Mr Herkströter. He pointed to China as a potential opportunity for Shell to invest in electricity generation because of the country's vast coal reserves.

The decision to diversify into power generation marks a big change in strategy for Shell which has spent the past five years selling off non-traditional businesses.

In 1994, Shell sold its loss-making metals business. Billiton, Shell's coal business has been a weak performer, but the Royal Dutch chairman said he saw opportunities to make coal more profitable.

Menzies shares plunge 12% after profit fall

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

SHARES of John Menzies plunged 12 per cent yesterday after it reported a decline in interim profits, blaming poor trading at its Early Learning Centre (ELC) children's shops.

And a trading statement from Hamleys confirmed that the toy market was tough in the run-up to Christmas. Pre-tax profits at John Menzies were £2.6 million in the six months to November 2, down from £3.8 million. Comparable retail sales were down 1 per cent and at ELC were down 4 per cent at the half-way stage. In the eight weeks to December 28, toy sales were down 7 per cent.

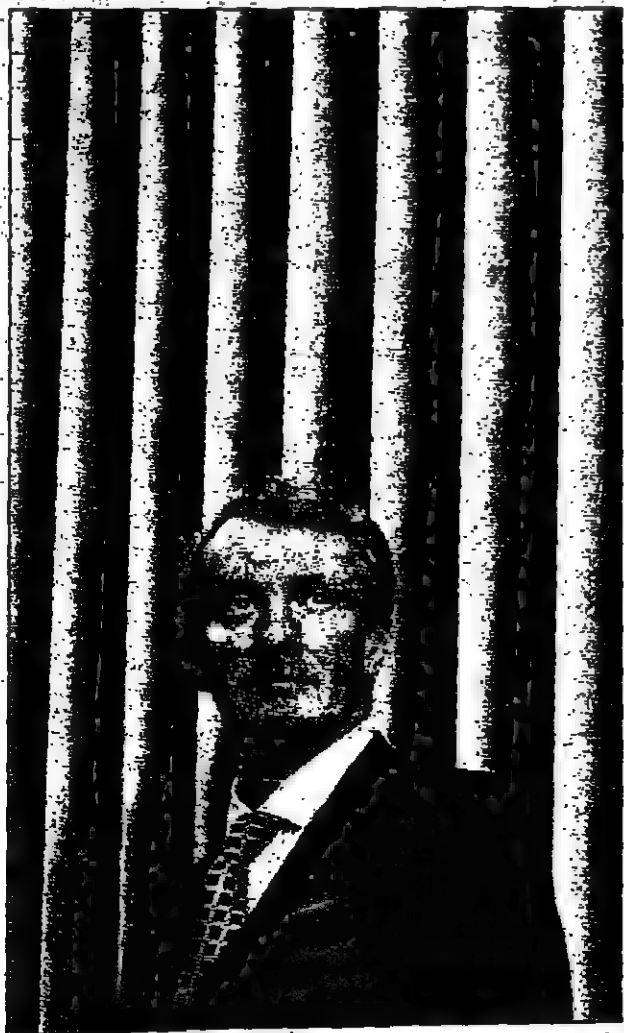
The group has begun expanding the ELC range to appeal to older children and to include more branded goods. David Mackay, who took over as managing director two weeks ago, said: "We are determined to get the business going again."

However, John Menzies, chairman, said that the shortfall in first-half profits would not be made up in the remainder of the year. That led analysts to downgrade forecasts for the year to £34 million, from £41 million. The shares fell to 477.5p, from 545p.

Sales at the retail division rose 4 per cent to £192.5 million, mainly because of additional space, but it lost £6.2 million (£5.6 million loss). Distribution services' sales grew 11.3 per cent to £453.1 million.

Menzies interim dividend is 4.8p, payable on April 1.

Hamleys said that sales rose 3.6 per cent in the five months to December 31, while in the 11



David Mackay intends to boost Early Learning Centre

months from February to the end of December they were 5.6 per cent ahead. It said that trading in the three weeks before Christmas was below last year's level, but picked up

significantly in Christmas week. It said sales in January had started well and were above last year's.

Tempos, page 26

Proteus has regained self-belief, says Miller

BY PAUL DURMAN

PROTEUS International, the drug discovery company, yesterday declared it had put an end to the "culture of failure" that gripped it a year ago.

Allen Miller, the former Wellcome Foundation chemist who is research and development director at Proteus, said that when he arrived last March "people didn't believe in themselves, they didn't believe in a future for Proteus".

Proteus has repeatedly failed to meet its extravagant promises and would have gone bust last year but for a £9.5 million rescue share issue.

Under Dr Miller, Proteus is concentrating on a narrower range of drug targets. He has satisfied himself of the effectiveness of Promethesin, the company's much-hyped software for computer-aided molecule design (CAMD).

The company's other hope is the development of immunotherapeutics, such as the prostate cancer drug it has licensed to ML Labs. Proteus is also working on DNA-binding drugs.

David Gratton, who has become executive chairman after last summer's surprise departure of Yurek Sikorski, the chief executive, said he was "fully aware of our credibility problem", but Proteus's £8.7 million of cash gave the company "at least 12 months to get on with the job".

In the six months to September 30, Proteus trimmed its losses to £1.9 million (£3.7 million), helped by revenues of £413,000.

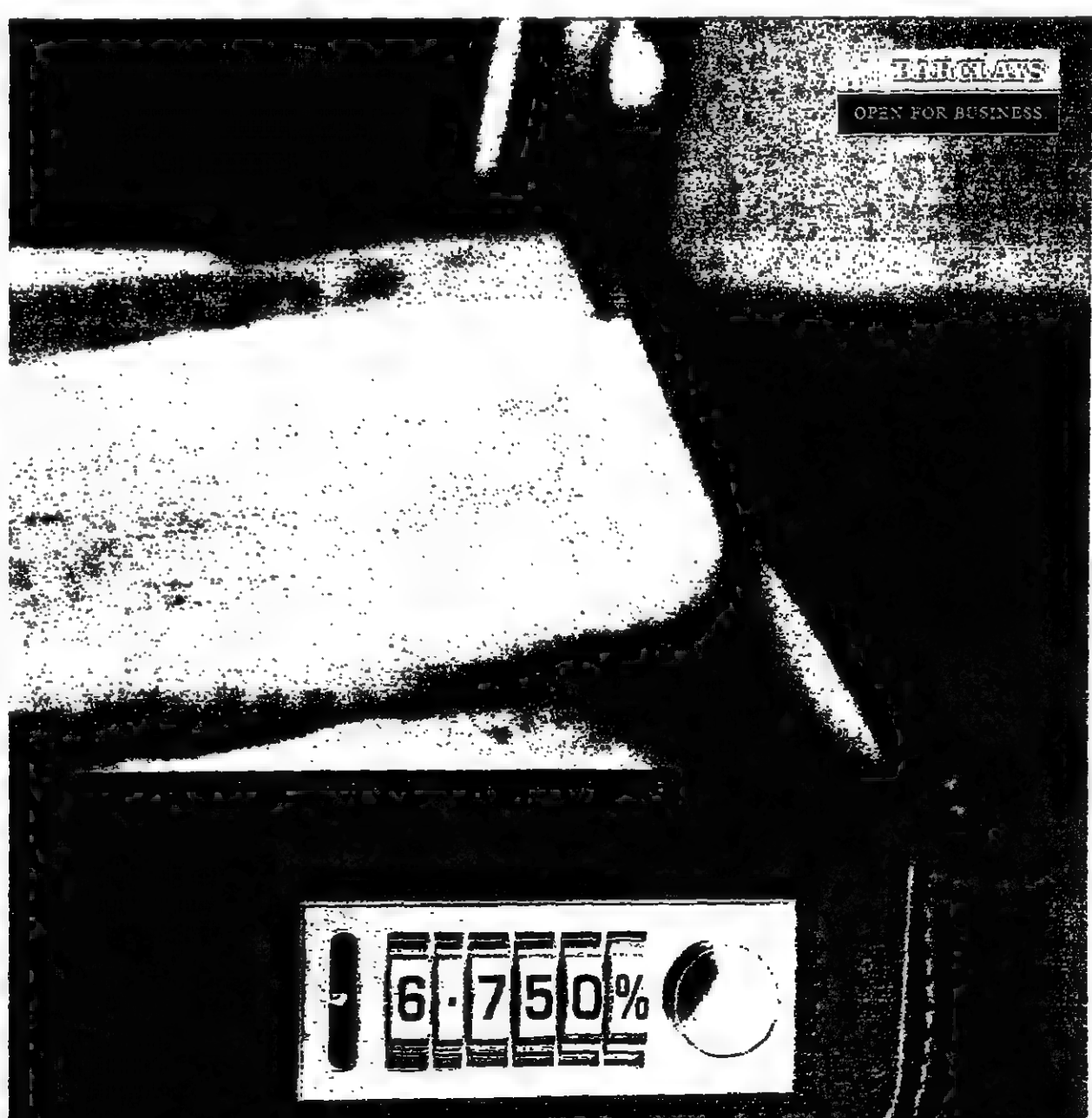
PSD flotation date

PSD GROUP, the recruitment services company, is coming to the main market next month via a flotation that should see it valued at £40 million (Fraser Nelson writes).

Peter Hearn, PSD's founder and chairman, will become a paper millionaire after the flotation, with his 42 per cent stake in the company on course to be

valued at £16 million. Mr Hearn, a former accountant, set up the company with £200,000 six years ago.

After acquisitions, the last of which was Hoggatt Bowers in 1994, PSD has become one of the leading recruitment agencies in Britain. It produced operating profit of £4.3 million in the nine months to September 30, after profits of £3.6 million over 1995.



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£250,000 - £499,999	6.375% gross	5.10% net	£5,000 - £24,999	5.875% gross	4.70% net

GRAND BATH is the conventional rate of interest payable net taking account of the deduction of income tax at the lower rate. NET RATE is the rate which would be payable after allowing for the deduction of income tax at the lower rate. The Tax Deduction Scheme for Interest (TDS) may vary and, therefore, the net rate is given as an illustration only. The net rate will only be deducted in those cases where the bank is obliged to do so. A quarterly interest payment option is also available to Barclays Business Account holders. Further details available on request.

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LORD HARRIS of Peckham has learnt from his past mistakes. He will not be spending his £24 million windfall on carp. He did that the last time that he sold a stake in his carpet company, and has been reeling the day ever since. His 100 carp are lying low in the bottom of their giant pool in Kent. In summer, however, the odd one will feed straight from their owner's hand. But Lord Harris is giving them away, one by one. "They are the worst investment," he curses. "They die, and then who wants to buy them when they're dead? I don't want them to die, but I wouldn't do it again."

Standing down

MEANWHILE, the Tories may soon be seeking a new top-level fundraiser. Lord Harris, also highly successful deputy treasurer of the Conservative Party, is expected to leave the job after the election. The carpet multimillionaire, who spends just four days a week at Carpetright because of his fundraising commitments, said he wants to spend more time with his business and his family after the election. Sounds ominous...

TWO magnum in the wine trade have been swallowed up by the courts. Tony Mason, trading director of Majestic, and Richard Macadam, managing director of Odalis, are on jury service.

Licensed to call

A FORMER prime minister and retired secret agent top the list of well-known subjects with whom Americans would most like to speak over the phone, according to a survey by MCI One. American men plumped for Baroness Thatcher, while women in the US went for Sean Connery. Bad news, Tony Blair, John Major was not on the 007 actor's heels.



Connery: topped survey

Home fixture

GOOD news for Mark Corbridge, the former merchant banker who is steering Newcastle United to the stock market. He has found somewhere to live at last. Since joining the club in the autumn, Corbridge has been squatting at the Gosforth Park hotel and commuting back to his wife and new baby in Leeds. His move coincided with a massive investment in the North East by Siemens.

Plain wordy

A LEAKED circular from Lloyds Bank lands on my desk. It is a "Change of Titles" memorandum that ought to have the supporters of the Plain English Campaign choking on their vowels. For example: "With effect from January 1, the Operations segment within branches will be known as Customer Services — both managers, operations and operations managers will in future be titled customer services manager."

AND you thought Securities and Futures Authority was a mouthful. Germany's securities regulator, which met in London yesterday for talks with the SFA, is the Bundesanstalt für den Wertpapierhandel.

MORAG PRESTON

ECONOMIC VIEW

ANATOLE KALETSKY



Can Brown learn Clarke's tricks?

If the pound is too strong, it brings balance of payments and inflation troubles

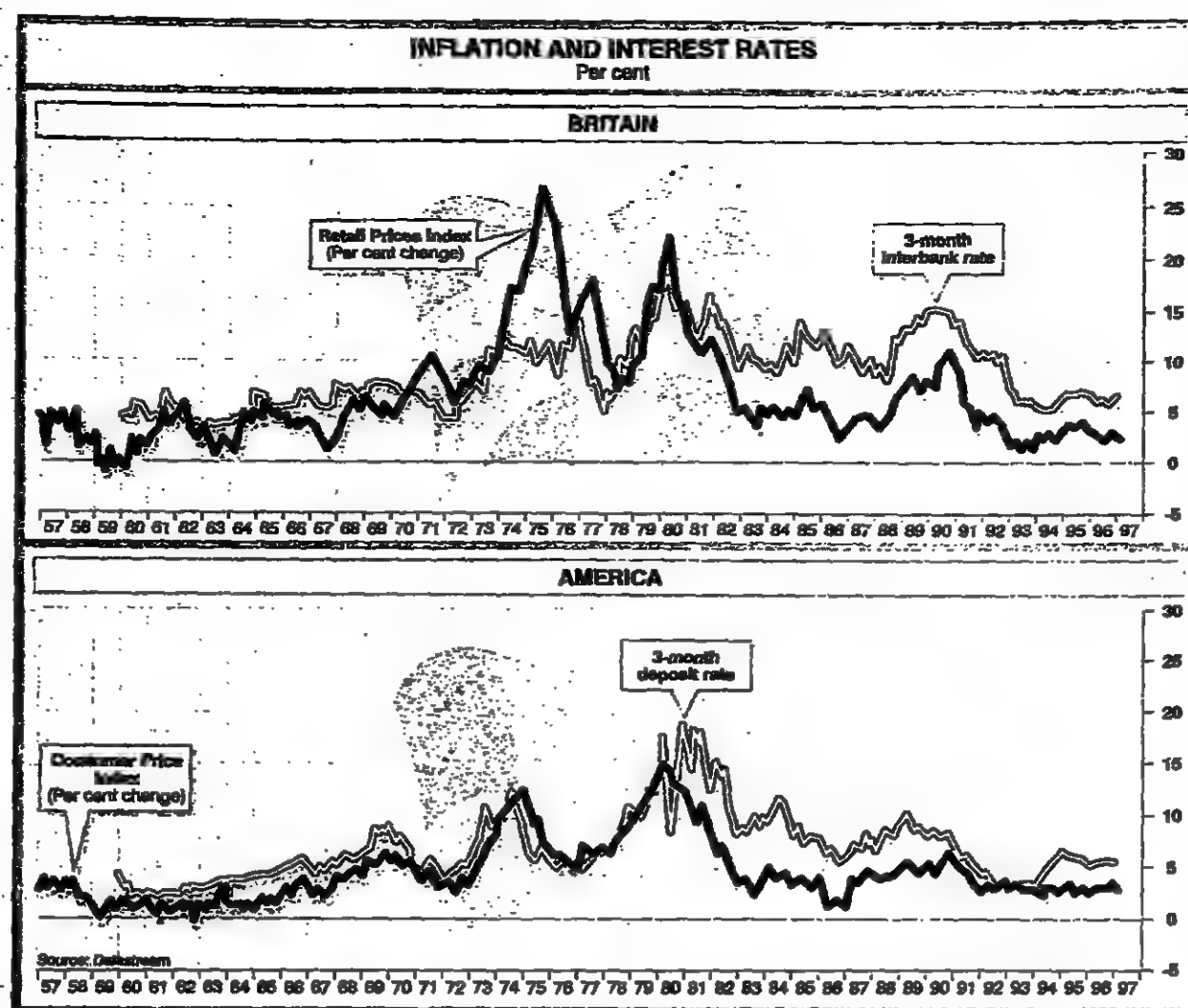
Once again Kenneth Clarke has shown better economic judgment than the professionals in the financial markets. The Chancellor's decision to raise interest rates by only a quarter point last October was a quarter point too much for my liking, but it was not remotely tough enough to satisfy the City commentators baying for economic blood.

Ever since the Budget, City commentators have been foaming at the mouth about a repeat of Nigel Lawson's boom-bust cycles. But there has been no Christmas shopping frenzy, despite the reports of consumer stampedes on the high streets.

Demand was decent in the Christmas sales, but by no means excessive. More importantly, as evidenced in yesterday morning's inflation figures, there has been very little sign of inflationary pressure originating from the steady increase in consumer spending and jobs. Against this background, it was hardly surprising that Mr Clarke decided against any further increase in interest rates this week.

Mr Clarke, then, has clearly won the first round of his battle to convince the markets that British economic policy needs nothing more dramatic than a modest mid-course correction. There is no Lawson-style boom under way and none on the horizon, despite the Pavlovian association between Britain's supposedly "politicised" system for conducting monetary policy and destabilising pre-election booms.

Forgetting politics and looking purely at the economics, Mr Clarke has almost certainly been right not to tighten economic policy any more than he did in November. But looking further ahead, is it really possible that November's quarter-point increase in base rates will be all the monetary tightening needed for the foreseeable future? And has the Budget, reasonable though it was as an interim measure, really done enough to maintain a sensible rate of demand expansion and put Britain's public finances on a



sound footing in the long-term?

The answer is surely that, although we are not facing any kind of emergency, more action to restrain the economy will eventually be required. Britain is not on the brink of an unsustainable boom and, in common with the rest of the world, is benefiting from a long-term structural decline in inflation.

But this does not mean that demand should be allowed to accelerate unchecked and that the modest cyclical build-up in inflationary pressures towards the end of this decade should simply be ignored. The world has suffered excessively from crude and heavy-handed policies against inflation. But having gone through all this pain, a situation has now been created in which it is relatively easy to control inflation and it would be folly to throw this opportunity away. It is inevitable, therefore, that some further tightening in monetary or fiscal policy or both will therefore be required in the next few years. The question is how this tightening should be imposed. In the short-term a realistic judgment continues to be what it has been all along: that base rates would rise one more time before the election, probably at

the next "Ken and Eddie" meeting on February 5, which will come just after the publication of fourth-quarter GDP figures, provided these figures are reasonably robust. After that monetary policy will quite sensibly be put on hold until after the election.

What happens beyond that will depend on who wins the election and what tax and spending policies they adopt. The general assumption is that interest rates will rise

become preoccupied with an enigmatic quality called "financial confidence" and sacrifice all their other policies to "defend" the pound.

It is quite possible that Gordon Brown's first act in office will be to step straight back into the straitjacket of a financially oriented monetary policy, from which Britain was liberated on White Wednesday. This is, indeed, the most likely prospect. If so, Mr Brown's main priorities will

Brown could realise that every previous Labour government was destroyed by an overly strong exchange rate and learn the lessons so successfully drawn by Kenneth Clarke from the failures of Nigel Lawson and Norman Lamont. The Tories, on the other hand, could ironically find themselves suffering from their own successes if they were returned to power.

Suppose, first, that the Tories win the election. There would quite possibly be a further upsurge in consumer confidence as Tories went out to celebrate, while Labour voters drowned their sorrows in the shops. More seriously, the stockmarket would enjoy a runaway boom as the threat of the windfall tax was lifted. There would also be no prospect of any government action to discourage consumers from spending the £20 billion worth of building society windfalls that they are due to receive in the next 12 months.

Taking all these factors together, an increase in interest rates to 7.5 per cent or even higher would be reasonable to expect, and even to support. Without an increase in interest rates to well above 7 per cent, there would begin to be a serious risk of economic over-

In the Lawson boom, financial by-products of house price rises did the real damage

quite sharply if Labour is elected, but will move only slightly, peaking at 7 per cent or lower, in the unlikely event of the Tories being returned to power.

This would be a reasonable view if Britain were still operating in some kind of fixed exchange-rate system. When monetary policy is guided by the currency markets, the paramount considerations are not, as they should be, the prospects for domestic demand. Instead governments

be clear: to establish his "credibility" with the financial markets and to show off his virility as a champion of the hard pound. He will raise interest rates sharply, allow sterling to float upwards and set in train the real boom-bust cycle which has dogged British economic policy for almost 100 years: the boom of an overly strong currency followed by the bust of a balance of payments and inflation crisis.

There is, however, another possibility. Perhaps Mr

Flexible ways of the Panel exceptionally hard to beat

Jon Ashworth on a watchdog keen to preserve its freedom of action

Charles Dickens, were he alive, would find a worthy target in the Takeover Panel. The very name conjures images of gas lamps and cobwebs, of greying gentlemen pondering leather-clad tones in dingy offices, the air thick with smoke and decay. It has the air of a Victorian institution, a cosy club, an anachronism. All the more startling, when one considers that this most august of City institutions is not yet 30 years old.

This "clubbiness" has dogged the Panel over the years, and with good reason. All but one of its directors — the head of the executive that takes the day-to-day decisions — has been drawn from the ranks of merchant banking. Meetings take place behind closed doors. Decisions are published in stiff communiques.

Arcane, perhaps — yet the Panel insists that it is anything but a club. Its membership is as diverse as one could hope for, spanning Bank of England appointees, industrialists, bankers and regulators. These "non-executives" are one step removed from the hands-on Panel executive, made up of bankers, lawyers and accountants seconded from their respective firms. The executive takes the decisions. The Panel sits to hear appeals, and holds quarterly meetings — as it did on Wednesday evening. The structure is flexible and responsive, steered by the guiding principles of the City code on takeovers and mergers. And its offices? They may be a little basic, but dingy is going too far. The Panel

occupies the entire twentieth floor of the London Stock Exchange, literally and metaphorically overseeing its constituents. It might be a little lacking in frills — try telephoning it for instance — but one should not be too harsh. The Panel is often in the news, most recently in the

table. He has a unique experience of this, having defended Northern Electric against the original Trafalgar House bid.

Nicholas Durlacher, chairman of the Securities and Futures Authority (SFA), is both a Panel member and a director of BZW, William Staple, who retired as director-general last March, is the younger brother of George Staple, head of the Serious Fraud Office (SFO). His predecessor, Frances Heaton, is a director of the Bank of England. So it goes on.

Many of the players do know one another but the "old school tie" element is forcibly suppressed. Mr

Defriez says: "We banish from our minds any thought of who's going to win, and who's going to lose, not favouring one side or another. We're like a referee at a sporting event. Do we award a penalty if a foul has been committed? Our main purpose is to ensure fair treatment for investors in the target company, and fairness between competing bidders."

The circumstances of a bid are always unique. We must apply the code according to the spirit, not just the letter."

The Panel has presided over more than 6,000 takeovers since its formation in 1966, and prides itself on its non-statutory status. This freedom to move without recourse to the courts was endorsed in the wake of the Guinness Affair, although Brussels poses a continuing threat. A proposed European Commission directive, published in a watered-down form in February 1996, has yet to go before the European Parliament.

Vague as it is, the directive would compel the Panel to transpose itself under a legal framework, making it much more open to legal challenge. Mr Defriez says: "It would be easier for people to take a grievance to court. What we fear is essentially tactical litigation — the defending side trying to stop the whole thing."

Directives are normally implemented at the national level by statutory means. Peter Prazer, a long-serving member of the Panel executive, had this to say, ahead of his retirement last year: "We have survived for so long because we can be flexible, and can evolve to meet new situations. We can move quicker than any court or judge. And because we are voluntary, we get exceptional, high-quality seconded staff."

Mr Defriez and his colleagues will be hoping the arrangement continues, whatever the Panel's detractors say. This is one membership that cannot be bought.



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BT agrees \$1bn deal in Nigeria

BT yesterday won a contract, estimated to be valued at more than \$1 billion, to install and operate a network of one million phone lines in Nigeria over the next five years. The contract was awarded to BT Telecom, a subsidiary of NITTI, the holder of Nigeria's second telecommunications licence. NITTI's founders include the Emir of Kano, head of the Hausa tribe, and the Ooni of Ife, nominal head of the Yoruba tribe, who want to modernise the telecoms infrastructure in a country where the ratio of phone lines is less than one per 100 head of population.

McKay higher

McKay Securities, the property development and investment company, lifted pre-tax profits to £1.68 million, from £1.4 million, in the half-year to September 30, reflecting new lettings at Staines, Bicester, Sutton and Parkside, and lower interest costs. Earnings were 4.6p a share (4.4p). The interim dividend is increased to 2.3p a share, from 2.1p.

BLP disposal

BLP Group, the wood veneer manufacturer, is to dispose of Berg-Profile, its American division. A management buyout team will pay \$2.1 million for the business and assume debts that stood at \$1.53 million at the end of December. Berg-Profile lost \$140,000 in the year to December 31, 1995. Disposal of the division will give rise to a goodwill charge of £250,000.

Easdaq \$1bn

Easdaq, the pan-European stock market for growth companies, will have a total market capitalisation of more than \$1 billion less than two months after securing its first listing. Shares of Mercer International, a company incorporated in Switzerland but based in the pulp and paper manufacturing sector, will begin trading today, giving the company a market capitalisation of \$160 million.

First Leisure goes for growth with £100m investment plan

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

FIRST LEISURE has earmarked £100 million for new openings across its leisure businesses that will create about 2,000 jobs in the next two years.

The projects include the building of two new snowdome indoor skiing centres — and rapid expansion of the newly created health and fitness chain.

The company said that it would spend about £55 million on new investments this year, compared with £30 million in the previous year.

First Leisure yesterday unveiled a 9 per cent increase in full-year pre-tax profits to £44 million. Overall turnover rose 15 per cent to £183 million.

Michael Grade, chairman, said the company had benefited from a sustained improvement in consumer confidence throughout the autumn. But shares in the company fell 8½p to 33½p because of profit-taking and concerns about the impact of the cold snap on Christmas trading.

The nightclub and bar division increased profits 16 per cent to £22 million. The com-



Graham Coles, First Leisure's finance director, left, and John Conlan, chief executive.

pany said it had improved corporate and party business at its venues and was aiming to add six new nightclubs this year, bringing the total to 40. The company will also con-

tinue the expansion of its Brannigans pub brand from the existing four sites.

Profits in the sports division rose 15 per cent to £13 million, boosted by rising admissions

and spending at the company's bowling centres. First Leisure, of which John Conlan is chief executive, said that it was aiming to develop a wider entertainment concept at the

centres, building arcade attractions as well as bar and restaurant facilities. The company added that the first Snowdome, at Tamworth, traded well in its first year.

The resorts division, which includes Blackpool Tower, increased profits 15 per cent to £10.7 million. But profits in the bingo division fell from £1.7 million to £200,000 because of the continuing negative impact of the National Lottery and write-offs for new openings.

Bingo admissions declined 17 per cent on a like-for-like basis, although First Leisure said that spending per head was above expectations.

The company said it would continue with its programme of new openings under the Riva brand and that it was confident of being in position to benefit from prospective deregulation measures. Profits in the theatre division also fell.

The company added that recent trading remained generally strong. The total dividend was increased 9 per cent to 8.44p. A final dividend of 5.93p is payable on April 8.

Temps, page 26

Surveyors sight building revival

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

CONSTRUCTION is on course to come in from the cold this year after further improvement in the amount of work at planning stage.

Workload in building has risen to its highest level since 1993, according to the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, which also forecasts more optimism for the industry. The latest RICS survey shows a rise of 2.4 per cent in construction workload in the last quarter of 1996, compared with the previous quarter, and a 4 per cent increase on the same period in 1995.

Workload and expectations from the RICS are seen as a good indicator of future growth because of the early-stage involvement of surveyors in building work.

Richard Houghton, for the

RICS, said: "Progress made by the construction industry over the last 12 months is nothing short of remarkable. With conditions in place for sustained growth, there is good reason for optimism. The industry remains extremely competitive, with margins cut to the bone. With a greater number of developments now committed, and more to come on stream, it is full steam ahead for the construction industry."

Private commercial developments have fuelled much of the workload increase, with that sector up 3.5 per cent. Private housing halted its long-term decline and held steady in the last quarter. Social housing, however, fell by 1 per cent on the back of cuts in government grants announced in the Budget.

Small firms voice fears on 48-hour work week

By DOMINIC KENNEDY, SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

MOST small businesses fear the maximum 48-hour working week being imposed by Brussels and the minimum wage proposed by Labour, according to a survey today.

Nearly every employee who works more than 48 hours does so as a volunteer, the British Chambers of Commerce discovered after questioning 517 firms, each with fewer than 50 staff.

The Department of Trade and Industry is consulting employers about imposing a 48-hour week after the European Court of Justice rejected the UK's challenge to the directive. Almost half of British small firms rely on at least one member of staff working more than 48 hours.

Only 9 per cent of those workers have such a long week written into their contracts. The rest are volunteers.

The 48-hour week is opposed by 67 per cent of small businesses, mainly because they believe working hours should be decided between employer and worker. Only 10 per cent support the directive.

A statutory minimum wage, which has been promised if Labour wins the election, is also widely opposed. Only 19 per cent of small firms thought it was the best way to tackle low pay.

The level of the minimum wage is crucial. If it was set at £3.50, as aides to Tony Blair, the Labour leader, have hinted, it would affect just 15 per cent of the firms.

At £4.25, which the TUC is likely to demand, it would affect 55 per cent. Most firms believe such a high minimum would reduce their profits, 44 per cent would have to cut their workforce and 33 per cent would increase prices.

Allied Textiles sees profit slip

By OLIVER AUGUST

ALLIED TEXTILES' interest in a former communist business venture has yet to benefit the manufacturer and processor of textiles.

Pre-tax profits fell from £18.9 million to £18.4 million in the year to September 30 for Allied Textiles, which last year acquired Halbmond, a carpet maker more than 100 years old, situated in Saxony, eastern Germany's new industrial powerhouse. Under communist control, Halbmond supplied rugs to the Soviet bloc.

Allied's earnings per share fell 0.8p to 18.7p. The full-year dividend is up to 7.8p, from 7.3p.

Peter Honeysett, Allied chairman, said: "It will take time to integrate this long-term investment into our business and harvest its undoubted profit potential."

The impact on our profitability is unlikely to be significant for the next couple of years."

The group said its diversified businesses all operating "well in line with their budgets overall", as a rise in activity continued into the new year.

Mr Honeysett said: "The directors remain committed to the improvement of shareholder value by organic growth, acquisition and by disposal where necessary, and we are looking forward to yet another satisfactory outcome to the current year."

He said of the carpets side of Allied: "Carpets has been a beneficiary of much management attention as we have sought to restore the fortunes of a sector of our business which has underperformed for a number of years."

Finelist leads car parts market after £61m deal

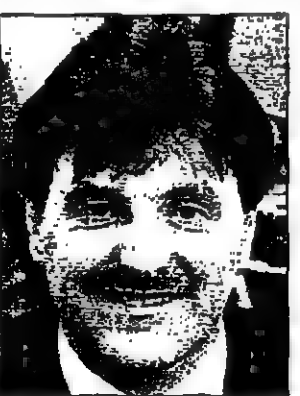
By FRASER NELSON

FINELIST is to become the biggest distributor of car parts in Britain with the purchase of Ferraris, the specialist car supplies merchant, from Tomkins for £61 million.

Chris Swan, Finelist's chairman, said the deal was the culmination of a 50-year relationship between the two companies, and will deliver immediate cost savings.

The buy, which includes debt of £9 million, is being financed by £16 million in shares, and a rights issue to raise £35 million. Ferraris is the market leader in specialist car parts supplies. It runs 17 warehouses and, like Finelist, guarantees same-day delivery.

Finelist carries a more limited range, but operates from a



Swan: foresees savings

network of 218 stores. While the two companies will be run separately, both order from common suppliers. Finelist said that joining forces would enable them to command bet-

ter prices. It also intends to profit from the automotive industry's shift towards a smaller client base.

Finelist is offering 11.6 million new shares at 320p each on a 4-for-17 basis. Its shares rose 32½p to a new high of 397½p yesterday, valuing the company at £196 million.

The deal comes six months after it bought Motor World, Britain's second-largest high street parts dealer, for £48 million. Mr Swan, who floated Finelist at £28 million three years ago, said the merger had gone better than expected.

He said overall trading was going well, and forecast a 73 per cent leap in profits for the six months to December 31, from more than £7 million. The interim dividend is expected to be 2.2p (1.9p).

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LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the matter of the estate of the late Mr. John Smith, deceased. The executor of the will of the late Mr. John Smith, deceased, hereby gives notice that he has received the will of the late Mr. John Smith, deceased, and that he is now in possession of the same. He has also received the assets of the estate and is now in a position to distribute the same to the creditors of the estate.

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Selective buying lifts equities

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Company	Price	Change	%	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Company	Price	Change	%
100	95	ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES				100	95	ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES			
100	95	BANKS				100	95	BANKS			
100	95	BREWERIES, PUBS & REST				100	95	BREWERIES, PUBS & REST			
100	95	DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS				100	95	DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS			
100	95	ENGINEERING, VEHICLES				100	95	ENGINEERING, VEHICLES			
100	95	FOOD MANUFACTURERS				100	95	FOOD MANUFACTURERS			
100	95	HOUSEHOLD GOODS				100	95	HOUSEHOLD GOODS			
100	95	BUILDING & CONSTRUCT				100	95	BUILDING & CONSTRUCT			
100	95	ELECTRICITY				100	95	ELECTRICITY			
100	95	ELECTRONIC & ELECT				100	95	ELECTRONIC & ELECT			
100	95	HEALTHCARE				100	95	HEALTHCARE			
100	95	INSURANCE				100	95	INSURANCE			
100	95	INVESTMENT TRUSTS				100	95	INVESTMENT TRUSTS			
100	95	DISTRIBUTORS				100	95	DISTRIBUTORS			

1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Company	Price	Change	%	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Company	Price	Change	%
100	95	MINING				100	95	MINING			
100	95	LEISURE & HOTELS				100	95	LEISURE & HOTELS			
100	95	PROPERTY				100	95	PROPERTY			
100	95	TELECOMMUNICATIONS				100	95	TELECOMMUNICATIONS			
100	95	TEXTILES & APPAREL				100	95	TEXTILES & APPAREL			
100	95	RETAILERS, FOOD				100	95	RETAILERS, FOOD			
100	95	RETAILERS, GENERAL				100	95	RETAILERS, GENERAL			
100	95	WATER				100	95	WATER			
100	95	ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET				100	95	ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET			



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100	95	SHORTS (under 5 years)				100	95	SHORTS (under 5 years)			
100	95	LONGS (over 15 years)				100	95	LONGS (over 15 years)			
100	95	UNDATED				100	95	UNDATED			
100	95	INDEX-LINKED				100	95	INDEX-LINKED			

1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Company	Price	Change	%	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Company	Price	Change	%
100	95	PHARMACEUTICALS				100	95	PHARMACEUTICALS			
100	95	PRINTING & PAPER				100	95	PRINTING & PAPER			
100	95	SUPPORT SERVICES				100	95	SUPPORT SERVICES			
100	95	PROPERTY				100	95	PROPERTY			
100	95	TELECOMMUNICATIONS				100	95	TELECOMMUNICATIONS			
100	95	TEXTILES & APPAREL				100	95	TEXTILES & APPAREL			
100	95	RETAILERS, FOOD				100	95	RETAILERS, FOOD			
100	95	RETAILERS, GENERAL				100	95	RETAILERS, GENERAL			
100	95	WATER				100	95	WATER			
100	95	ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET				100	95	ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET			

THEATRE 2

**An evocative
one-woman show
by Caroline
Blakiston comes
to the Jermyn
Street Theatre**

FRINGE THEATRE: The 1997 Guinness Pub Theatre Awards; plus a delightful solo show



Daniel Rosenthal on a growing initiative to bring theatre productions to pub-goers all over Britain

the premiere of his new play *The Ghost of a Chance*, in a function room at the New Billersey, Birmingham, starring Paul Henry (destined to be remembered forever as Benny in *Crossroads*).

In May and June, Theatre Bara Caws (Bread and Cheese Theatre) will visit 30 pubs and clubs all over Gwynedd with their winning entry, a Welsh-language comedy set in

And in Scotland, Invisible Bouncers are using their £10,000 award to develop new work in remote Highland communities. The company founder, Alastair McDonald, is aiming for 'punchy, music-driven shows exploring land ownership and nationalism'. The first stops on their pulse tour will include the tiny inn at Glenuig (adult population: 32) — a venue which, says McDonald, "is probably paradise on earth".

st performance, so with virtually no rehearsal she found herself with a grieving company, acting opposite a stand-in.

show needs running in and out not at the cost of informality and a little tuning. But if Blakiston is on the road, as she should be, it will be time for that. It is already time to spend 100 minutes in the company of an actress who, I'm sure, her Russian colleagues feeling as they did her.

**BENEDICT
NIGHTINGALE**

BENEDICT
NIGHTINGALE

FRINGE T

Sarah Downing and Karl

A pin

You stroll down to the local for a quiet nip and what happens? The barman is still counting out your change when a couple leap to their feet, announcing that they are competitors in a game that is a cross between Cluedo and *Reservoir Dogs*. And you, your fellow drinkers must help them to solve an imaginary murder.

Regulars at The Lescar, in Sheffield, will become em

broiled in this improbable scenario in April, when two actors from the city's Reflex Theatre Company launch into *Lock In*, one of the shows coming to a saloon bar near you soon, courtesy of the Guinness Awards for Pulchritude.

Eighteen professional and three amateur companies have received awards worth a total of £150,000 at ceremonies held all this week around the city.

CAROLINE Blakiston is curbing the Pit, playing a stately but to hilarious effect in Molière's *Ladies*. But a gap in the RSC brings her and her delightful *show*, *Black Bread and Cucumbers*, to the little Jermyrn Street Theatre for the next ten days.

Until January 28 you may be recalling the trips the madly early Nineties to what stopped the Soviet Union, and started Russia, in order to play *Charm*, eccentric goodness, in *The Orchard*.

The first time was not in the

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Even for graduates, finding a first job can be a traumatic experience. David Charter offers advice on how

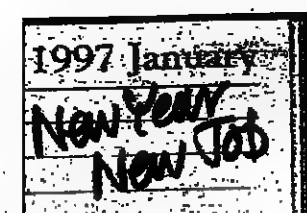


The huge expansion in student numbers in the past decade has flooded the market, making it more difficult for employers to sift candidates

Want a plum job? How the careers service can help you

Graduates are finding that there is a lot more to landing a plum job than filling out a form and passing the traditional interview. Blue-chip companies are subjecting even the most promising candidates to a barrage of tests and tasks designed to assess their potential in areas beyond mere academic prowess.

The chosen ones who make it through to the final stage of the application process can expect to be whisked away to a residential assessment centre for up to three days of inten-



sive evaluation. This often occurs during term time and at fairly short notice — but those are the hoops you have to jump through to get on the fast track with prestige organisations such as BT, Unilever, Mars, Ford, Shell, the Civil Service and the Army.

Two reasons account for the emergence of company assessment centres. The first is that the huge expansion in university student numbers in the past decade has flooded the market with graduates, making it more difficult for employers to sift candidates. At the same time, leading companies do not consider that a university degree tells them much about a student's potential contribution to their organisation. Firms have watched the spread of assessment centres, which were pioneered by AT&T in America and in the UK by Unilever, and believe that they produce more reliable long-term prospects than old-fashioned interviews.

Geraldine Lyons, graduate recruitment manager at Mars UK, says: "What is valuable is putting students under a bit of pressure for a day, doing personally taxing exercises and seeing how they behave." The company receives up to 8,000 requests for application forms, and needs between 15 and 20 recruits. "The form provides the first filter, with questions such as 'If you could change one thing in the world, what would it be, and why?', followed by 'Why do you think we asked you this question?' Only 25 per cent of the forms are returned. There is no 'right' answer and Mars is not looking for any responses.

About 600 candidates will be asked to a Mars presentation evening, where they will sit verbal and numerical reasoning tests. Up to 400 will then be interviewed one-on-one and 96 will make it to the assessment centre. A final 35 will be asked back for another 36-hour ordeal.

At every stage, the students are graded on what Mars calls "thinks, wants and influences". This roughly translates to critical thinking, drive and ability to influence others. The single most important ability, however, is the ability to work in a team.

"By the time they get to the assessment centre," Miss Lyons says, "we know that they are bright people who have got through a tough interview and tests. We need to know how they work in a team environment. Do they have the sensitivity to deal with other people in groups and to influence them?"

This is what assessment centres aim to bring out through a host of team exercises such as problem-solving by committee and the "in-tray exercise", where the group has to prioritise the dozens of tasks a Mars manager might find on his or her desk.

Miss Lyons says students are not under constant scrutiny at the centre, however. Assessors do not "hide behind pot plants", although it would not be a good idea to get drunk at dinner. "That would be a shame because although it is not an assessed dinner, it is fairly formal," she says.

There is no dinner for candidates with their assessors at the 24-hour Marks & Spencer recruitment centre. They do not so much as share a drink at the bar. Kate Orebi Gann, a senior manager with the company, says: "We don't believe those social bits are part of the job. The centre tries to reflect as closely as possible the work the individual would be doing to give them the opportunity to display the skills they will need in the job."

This is why work experience has become even more essential for undergraduates hoping for a top appointment. Only a few university courses call for regular group work and other skills employers

value, such as oral presentation skills. Work experience can be vital preparation for the assessment centre experience.

Andrew Bottomley, director of the careers advisory service at Reading University, says students have to tune into the employment market increasingly early. "It is a vastly changing environment. Because of the explosion in undergraduate places, it has become very competitive."

At Reading, an introduction to the careers service has become part of the first-year course. During their third term, students must attend a presentation, including a video made by final-year students, featuring interviews with graduates about the university activities which helped their job prospects.

He says: "One of the most critical messages is that you have only two main summer vacations and these are the times you need to start getting some insights into the world of work. You cannot just drop into work experience. You have to plan it."

Franks, it is disastrous these days to leave it all to the end. The world of work is too competitive to leave job planning to the final term. Believing that a degree must equate to a career is not valid any longer.

Mike Killingley, a senior manager at Midland Bank, says Midland takes about 60 graduates from the 4,000 applicants to its executive trainee programme. Up to 250 are chosen to attend the bank's 24-hour residential assessment centre. These candidates are



Punters in the job market?

selected on three criteria: academic and non-academic records at university, and motivation and knowledge about Midland Bank and the financial services industry.

"The better people are going to be offered positions by a number of employers and what will turn Midland Bank on is not only someone with an academic record and whose non-academic interests and achievements are good, but also someone who can show they are motivated. Some people, almost any, what has Midland Bank got to offer me, but it has to work both ways."

The bank uses its assessment centre as part of the "two-way" selection decision. First, the candidate meets recent graduate recruits and senior managers and learns more about the bank. Secondly, he or she also undergoes a series of individual and group tasks so the bank can find out more about the applicant.

Mr Killingley says: "We are trying to give them a flavour of working for a very diverse financial institution." The exercises reflect day-to-day scenarios. "People don't talk so much about jobs for life but for us there is a real return because there are opportunities to work here for quite some time. If people can adapt and keep their skills up to date there are on-going opportunities, so it is worth it for us to put those resources in."

His advice to students? They should make use of their careers service. They should know where it is in the first year, and in the second year they should visit it. It is no good going in in the third year and saying: "What do employers want?"

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students should make the most of their time at university to give them a head start in the career stakes



Studying for a degree can be a long and hard process, but obtaining full-time employment can be even tougher

Why tradition is still the best bet

One in seven university students will take his or her final examination having already been offered a job. A wide-ranging survey of final-year students concludes that those who enjoy this enviable position are more likely to come from old universities.

A growing number of graduates admit that their first taste of employment will be in whatever job they can find to pay debts, whether or not it is relevant to their career plans.

This polarisation has followed the gradual decline in traditional graduate opportunities which has accompanied the doubling of student numbers since 1980. As companies seek fewer general managers, there are not as many old-style management training schemes, for example.

The burgeoning number of graduates seems to be convincing employers to concentrate on a narrower, not wider, range of institutions. At one end of the scale, high-flyers from a select band of universities choose between offers from several top companies. At the other end, students at former polytechnics, with de-



DAVID CHARTER

grees that are often more relevant to the companies' business, struggle to get through the door.

This is the conclusion of the Institute for Employment Research in its report *Great Expectations*, an analysis of the experiences and expectations of more than 5,000 final year students at 21 institutions.

Kate Purcell, who wrote the report with Jane Pitcher, says: "You still get big employers laying on grand champagne receptions at established universities and trying to persuade natural scientists to become accountants, while for students studying accountancy at new universities the onus is on them to go out and find a job."

The old graduate labour market is still there, relatively unchanged, with large organisations recruiting high-achieving students from a handful of universities to be their high-flying managers, administrators and professional specialists.

At the other end, students at former polytechnics, with de-

sometimes get jobs with blue-chip companies, but these companies do not generally go to the new universities to seek them out.

Further disadvantages for students at newer universities are also exposed by the research. Kate Purcell says: "Employers were said to use A-level results as a kind of filtering mechanism, so that 'late developers' and those who had come into higher education by non-standard routes were in danger of being excluded before they could enter the contest for many graduate appointments, whatever their degree performance."

Students are sceptical of the buzzwords in company recruitment material. The researchers say: "There was a measure of frustration with employers who claim to seek transferable skills and pay lip service to equal opportunities and widening access but invariably recruit from the same narrow range."

The graduate labour market is highly competitive, they say, and success relies ever more on an individual's own initiative. "The positive aspect of this is that employers will often consider applicants who approach them on their own initiative. Careers advisers stress the advantage gained by students who begin their job search activities early and are prepared to approach employers directly and market themselves effectively."

Twenty-five per cent of the final-year students said they would take the first temporary job they could get to pay off bills. The average amount of debt was £2,925, including money owed to the Student Loans Company, with nearly one in five expecting to owe more than £4,000 when they finished their degree.

The outlook for graduates is, however, not entirely gloomy. The Association of Graduate Recruiters, which represents hundreds of employers of all sizes, forecasts an above-average rise in earnings for graduates this year and an 11.5 per cent increase in vacancies.

The average starting salary for graduates last summer was £14,750, which was an increase of 5.4 per cent on the previous year.

'I applied to the Foreign Office'

Tom Miles, 23, knows that the language skills he has gained from a four-year degree in Chinese and Russian at Leeds University, give him a head start. But even final-year students with the world at their feet have to endure a gruelling round of interviews for the most coveted graduate placements.

"We had a special careers visit just for our department from a firm of international lawyers," says Tom, who has also applied to several large companies in Hong Kong. "I have always been aware it is not going to be difficult for me to get a job. It is more like I am spoilt for choice."

However, he still has to compete in the psychometric tests, general knowledge examinations and problem-solving exer-

cises demanded by leading employers. He has just received his first rejection, from the Civil Service, after trying for one of its fast-track places.

Tom says about 8,000 people applied for the ten coveted Foreign Office appointments. "About 2,000 took the examination and 350 survived, including me," Tom adds. "There is then a two-day assessment centre and interview stage."

There were 30 applicants at the centre who were interviewed by each of three assessors. They had psychometric tests and various individual tasks. For the in-tray exercise, candidates have 90 minutes to read a bundle of documents and decide which are the most urgent and what action to take. There is a summarising

exercise, putting a complex document into plain English. In the policy exercise, they must choose one of three responses to a tricky situation and back it up under heavy questioning later. "Each has its pros and cons; there is no right answer," he says. "It is just a matter of being able to argue the case."

Candidates were asked to describe their personality from the point of view of their best friend, worst enemy and university lecturer. In group exercises, the applicants have to reach a decision in front of the assessors, then have to take turns chairing a committee to solve a problem. "This took two days during term-time," Tom says. "They delve into your inner soul and leave you feeling completely exhausted."

Emma Hutcheson accepts that she will have to spend at least a year doing voluntary work before she lands her first "proper job" in the media.

All of her extracurricular efforts so far, including work experience at the BBC before her English course at Reading University, will give her only one foot in the door of her chosen field.

Emma, 21, is in her final year. Her ambitions lie in working in television or journalism. She says: "I have wanted to go into the media since I was 14 or 15, but I also wanted to see what other opportunities there were."

She says that her year off before university, when she spent several months shadowing a floor assistant at BBC Television Centre, was a good idea. "My personality developed and I became more confident," she explains. "I met lots of different people."

The long search for a 'proper' job

She has also used desktop publishing software while writing and designing a guidebook for undergraduates for the university careers service. "I would like to be a floor assistant," she says, "but I know I need a lot of work experience first."

"People who are doing the business-study side of things are going into high-powered jobs and know they are going to get money straight away; but some of my friends know they cannot just walk into the jobs they want, and if they want to do journalism, they will have to spend a year doing a course for it."

Is there anything she would change? "I would have gone to the careers service in my first year," she says. "I didn't go into it until three-quarters of the way through my second year, which gave me only one summer vacation to do something towards my career. The first summer I was just earning money."

POSTS

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The Governors invite applications for the post of Bursar and Clerk to the Governors on the retirement of the present Bursar, the position to be taken up from 1st September 1997. St Albans School is an independent HMC day school for 670 pupils between the age of 11 and 18. The School is predominantly for boys but girls are admitted to the Sixth Form. Applicants should possess proven experience in finance, administration and estate management.

Full details may be obtained from:

The Bursar
St Albans School, Abbey Gateway,
St Albans, Herts, AL3 4EB
Tel: (01727) 855521
Fax: (01727) 843447

The closing date for applications is 27th January 1997.
Charity No. 310005



THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM FACULTY OF LAW

READERSHIP, SENIOR LECTURESHIP OR LECTURESHIP IN LAW

The Faculty of Law invites applications for a vacant post which may be filled either at senior lecturer or lecturer level. In selecting the candidate, emphasis will be placed on his or her record or potential in research. A candidate with a distinguished record of scholarship or original research is eligible for consideration for appointment to a Readership.

Salary up to £31,357 the top point of the Senior Lecturer scale, or to £26,430 the top point of the Lecturer B scale.

Informal enquiries may be made to the Dean of the Faculty, Professor C. J. Miller, telephone 0121 414 3172, (e-mail: C.J.Miller.law@bham.ac.uk) or the Deputy Dean, Professor D. J. Feldman, telephone 0121 414 6283, (e-mail: D.J.Feldman@bham.ac.uk) or fax 0121 414 3585.

Starting date 1 September 1997 or by arrangement.

Application forms (returnable by 31 January 1997) and further particulars are available from the Director of Staffing Services, The University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT, telephone 0121 414 6489 (24 hours), (e-mail: STAFFING@BHAM.AC.UK). Please quote reference L785/97.

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September 1997/January 1998

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The post becomes vacant following the retirement of Mrs Elizabeth Prichard after many years of skilled management and leadership. This distinguished school, described by the media as "a model of its kind", occupies substantial purpose-built modern premises and is supported by over 50 highly motivated staff.

The successful applicant will have a proven record of management skills within Junior or Secondary schools.

Full details of the post may be obtained from:-
The Foundation Secretary, Warwick Schools Foundation, 3 Church Street,
Warwick, CV34 4AB

Closing date for applications: 10th February 1997.

UNIVERSITY
APPOINTMENTSUniversity
of DurhamBursar of University College
up to £29k

An energetic and innovative manager is required for this senior level College post, responsible to the Master of the College, which is housed in Durham Castle, for the management of finance, staff and buildings, including the vacation trade and other commercial activities. The successful candidate, who will have excellent managerial, financial and interpersonal skills, will be expected to assist in planning and fund-raising, and play a key role in the further development of an effective and responsive service to students and commercial customers. Experience of managing a large catering and residential establishment would be advantageous.

The appointment is renewable from 1 September 1997 or earlier if practicable. Initial salary depending upon experience on ALC grade 3 or 4 (range £23 - £29k per annum, plus residence).

For an informal discussion of the post, please contact Dr. E.C. Salthouse, Master of University College, on 0191 374 3860 or e-mail: E.C.Salthouse@durham.ac.uk

Application form and further details may be obtained from the Director of Personnel, University of Durham, Old Shire Hall, Durham DH1 3HP, tel: 0191 374 3140, fax: 0191 374 7253, to whom applications (3 copies) should be submitted, including the names of three referees. (Candidates outside the UK may submit one copy only).

Closing date: 14 February 1997. Please quote reference A62BA

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APPOINTMENTSCENTRE FOR PROCESS ANALYTICS AND CONTROL TECHNOLOGY
MANAGING DIRECTOR

Salary Negotiable from £35K

A Centre for Process Analytics and Control Technology (CPACT) has been established, involving the Universities of Strathclyde, Newcastle and Hull in collaboration with major industrial and science based companies. Funding from the Office of Science and Technology, through the Foresight Challenge programme, together with matching funds from end-user, instrument vendor and control technology companies, will provide CPACT with an annual budget of over £1M.

The research at the Centre will be industrially-driven to provide leading edge technology in process analysis and control engineering for the Chemical, Biochemical, Food, Materials and Processing industries.

CPACT is seeking to fill the position of Managing Director, a role which is key to its establishment and long term success as a world class centre.

The position will demand considerable initiative and will entail extensive travelling within the UK.

The Managing Director will be responsible for:

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- development of a strategy for extending external funding
- monitoring progress of research projects
- increasing CPACT membership
- liaison within the Centre
- facilitating technology transfer to industrial applications

The Managing Director will be supported by and be in liaison with the CPACT secretariat at Hull, Newcastle and Strathclyde Universities.

There is scope for flexibility in the location of the right candidate. The successful candidate will have:

- experience in the development, application and management of advanced innovative technology
- multi-million £ project management skills
- experience in one or more of the chemical, biochemical, food or materials processing industries
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- excellent presentation, communication and diplomacy skills
- experience of multi-disciplinary collaboration between industry and academia

The vision and desire to provide for the UK an on-going, world class centre, built upon a unique industry-academic partnership, to initiate a culture of integrated measurement and process control technology that will improve process efficiency, reduce costs and provide competitive advantage into the next millennium, is central to this position, which will be offered initially on a three-year contract.

Further particulars (Ref: 0977) are obtainable from the Personnel Office, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, G1 3XZ, Tel: 0141-550 4155 (24 hour National Service) or from Professor David Liddell, Department of Pure and Applied Chemistry, University of Strathclyde, Tel: 0141-550 2087, who will be pleased to discuss the post informally with potential applicants. Applications Closing Date: 3rd February 1997.

COURSES

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This well established part-time, two year course has been running since the 1970s and currently has BPS accreditation into the next century. It addresses all the BPS areas required as a prerequisite to full Chartered status, alongside practical and professional skills elements, including level A. It fulfils stage one of the Doctoral qualification.

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Informal enquiries to: Ruth Sage (Acting Course Tutor, MSc) on 0181 590 7000 ext 4496 or Richard Kwiatkowski (Acting Course Tutor, D.Occ.Psych.) ext 4472.

UNIVERSITY of
EAST LONDONLANCASTER
UNIVERSITYProgramme
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Centre for Training and
Development (CETAD)

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For further details/application form apply to Personnel Services, quoting reference L487, Lancaster University, Lancaster LA1 4YW. Answerphone, (01524) 846548. Closing date: 4th February 1997.

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Applications are invited for the above Chair which will become vacant from 1 October 1998 on the retirement of Professor G.H. Jones.

Present pensionable stipend £39,968.

Further information may be obtained from the Secretary General of the Faculties, University Offices, The Old Schools, Cambridge CB2 1TT, to whom applications, marked 'confidential', should be sent with the names of two referees by 10 March 1997.

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Details available from the Administrator, Modern History Faculty, Broad Street, Oxford, OX1 3BD Tel: 01865 272263, e-mail: Administrator@modernhistory.ox.ac.uk who will resolve applications (seven copies, but one from those abroad) up to Friday 28 February 1997.

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RACING

Marketing team targets punters

By RICHARD EVANS, RACING CORRESPONDENT

AFTER concentrating their meagre resources on promoting Sunday racing, sponsorship and attracting new racegoers, the small marketing team of the British Horseracing Board (BHB) intends to do more to encourage High Street punters.

The subtle switch in strategy, which is aimed at shoring up racing's declining share of turnover in betting shops, has prompted the creation of the Off-Course Betting Development Group — and its first task will be to examine the scope for a small stake big win "Superbet".

Peter Jones, the BHB member who is chairing the committee, said yesterday: "Racing's biggest source of revenue is the levy and racing's share of the off-course market is under significant threat."

The increasing appeal of sports betting, the introduction of fruit machines into betting shops and lottery-style 49s has reduced the proportion of off-course betting turnover on horses to around 70 per cent.

"I don't want this group to be yet another cumbersome committee which takes ages to do anything. This is quite urgent and a lot of the infor-

mation we need is available. That is why we hope people from the off-course market that are involved in this will contribute generously.

"Some people within racing take the erroneous view that bookmakers are not interested in racing turnover and are much more interested in other kinds of product. If any company thinks it can afford to ignore two-thirds or more of its turnover it is barmy — and the bookmakers certainly are not barmy."

The first initiative of the new group, funded jointly by Ladbrokes, the Tote and the BHB, will involve Professor Neville Topham of the Centre for the Study of Gambling examining the Tote Jackpot, Tote Direct and the scope for a Superbet. Deregulation will be also high on the agenda.

Lee Richardson, the BHB marketing director, added: "It is vital we persuade government to do away with restric-

tions concerning advertising betting on racing. Pools and bingo can advertise and we are in danger of becoming the only mainstream gambling product not allowed to use mass-media techniques."

Richardson has come in for criticism since starting a marketing department from scratch three years ago, but yesterday he produced figures to show that from a marketing investment of just over £1 million, new revenue of £16 million had been generated from new owners, racegoers and sponsors.

Unfortunately, the scope of his four-strong team is restricted by a budget which is pitifully small. Richardson's budget for marketing has remained unchanged this year at £460,000 — or 3.3 per cent of the BHB's racing administration fund.

"Whole media channels are completely out of bounds. We can't use posters, television or radio, other than on a very tactical basis."

According to his statistics, the average advertising promotion spend per racegoer in Britain is 16p — compared to 68p in Ireland, 93p in Japan, £1.47 in the United States and £4.03 in Victoria, home of the Melbourne Cup.



Woodlands Genhrie, the 100-1 winner of the Stephen Little and Dick Reynolds Bookmakers Handicap Chase at Taunton yesterday, clears a water jump flanked by ice removed from the obstacle.

The 12-year-old, ridden by Carl Llewellyn, was recording his first success for almost four years and the victory ended a losing run for his trainer, Peter Pritchard, which had extended over more than three years.

"I'm glad for him to be in the winner's spot as his owner, Joan Preece, has been loyal, sticks by her horses and has had this one with me since he was a three-year-old," Pritchard said. "I didn't back the horse but was going to have a terner each-way until our first runner went so badly in the seller."

Pritchard ruled out entering Woodlands Genhrie in the Grand National, but nominated the Midlands National at Uttoxeter as a likely objective.

On a day of surprise results, Sam Rockett landed the Pickering Selling Hurdle at odds of 16-1 for trainer Peter Mooney, and the Chris Popham-trained Oliver Duckett, at 14-1, took the Bickenhall Novices' Handicap Chase.

HOCKEY

Confident Slough prepare for showdown

By ALIN RAMSAY

SLOUGH travel to Crystal Palace this weekend with much on their mind. They have the defence of their indoor national league title to take care of and the more pressing concern of their European indoor campaign at the end of February to prepare for.

Still, they have made a good enough start to the domestic league, sitting at the top of the premier division table, ahead of Hightown on goal difference. Over the coming two days of competition they must face Leicester, Chelmsford and Olton before the final showdown with Hightown on Sunday afternoon.

Slough, though, are never anything but confident, and this year, in particular, they have good cause to be. Their outdoor squad is at its strongest for many seasons, with most of those players putting themselves forward for the indoor competitions as well. Even when affected by illness and injury, they can still win. Two weeks ago they scored a total of 21 goals in two matches despite missing the services of Sally Eyre, Helen Thornally, Julia Robertson and Ashley Wallace.

Their opening match saw them beat Ipswich 6-2, despite the Suffolk side being one of the early favourites. Slough were at full throttle against Sutton Coldfield, sweeping them away 15-2 and, regardless of the ease of the win, sticking to their game-plan until the final whistle.

Using the opening encounters to try a few new tactics in preparation for the European indoor club championship, Slough are now determined to kick-start their preparations with victory at Crystal Palace. Sue Chandler, one of the club's stalwarts and a member of England's indoor European Cup-winning side last year, has few doubts about their chances or the importance of the Hightown match.

"Hightown may have lost a couple of players and they may be playing down their chances, but there is no such thing as a bad Hightown side," she said. "It will be no surprise to anybody if we both get to that last match undefeated. But for us, with the strength of squad we have and with the flair players we have, it will be a huge disappointment if we don't win. We know we will not have reached our full potential if we lose."

THUNDERER	
1.40 Captain Jack	3.10 Philip's Woody
2.10 Fine Harvest	3.40 Daraydan
2.40 SUMMER SPELL (nap)	4.10 Tim

Our Newmarket Correspondent: 3.40 BLOMBERG (nap)

GOING: GOOD TO FIRM

TOTE JACKPOT MEETING

1.40 RUMPHYME CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS' NOVICES HANDICAP HURDLE (22.70; 3m 110yds) (5 runners)

101	102	103	104	105
106	107	108	109	110
111	112	113	114	115
116	117	118	119	120
121	122	123	124	125

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3.10 HAMWORTH HANDICAP CHASE (25.00; 3m) (5 runners)

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Rob Andrew says home unions are overplaying international cards

No side good enough for grand slam

One of the anomalies of this season so far is that, while exposure and interest in club rugby — whether domestic or European — has gone up, support for the international game has dwindled. That is a trend which the five nations' championship will surely reverse, but it must make the game's administrators stop and think.

There has always been a fallacy that spectators would turn up at Twickenham, or Murrayfield, or Cardiff to watch international rugby even if you put 15 monkeys on the field in white, or blue or red. That is actually not the case. People want to watch meaningful rugby matches and I'm convinced the rarity value has been killed.

People are not prepared to pay the cost of the match ticket if their imagination is not captured and, with the best will in the world, Italy and Argentina do not do that. There has been too much international rugby this season, too much average international rugby in contrast to the club

scene where a big occasion seems to come along virtually every week, created by greater quality, higher fitness levels, and the inherent excitement of fluctuating fortunes in the league.

But while we have seen 16 internationals involving five nations' sides this season, much of the rugby has been mediocre. For that reason — and I wish it was not the case — this is the most open five nations' championship I can remember. Whereas for the past decade you could confidently claim that England and France would contest the title, it is difficult to say so now.

The five nations' will ignite the fires once more: there will be full houses — a crowd of 13,500 for Wales against the United States last weekend must have depressed the players — but the sides must also produce good, hard rugby. People talk glibly about entertainment but that comes from close, hard-fought matches not from sevens played by 15 men: if we do not get such contests then we may not be

FIVE NATIONS' CHAMPIONSHIP



far from the day when a five nations' match does not pull a capacity crowd. The championship remains a fantastic tournament but we must keep examining the quality, keep asking questions about how it can be improved. If we do not, we should not be involved in the game. Comparisons with other parts of the world should not be avoided, indeed we should try to ensure that our game, with all the history behind it, is better than that on offer in the southern

hemisphere's tri-nations series. Yet here we have five teams, all apparently going through a transitional stage, not one of which has avoided considerable criticism in preparing for the five nations' championship.

You can argue a case for one of the Celtic countries coming out on top this year and I certainly don't think we are going to have a grand-slam winner. I would say that the best performance of any country before Christmas was that by Wales against a very good South Africa team.

The Wales players that day stood up and took the game to South Africa; they have their rugby league players back, bringing strength and professionalism to the whole side, and there seems to be a flicker of light at the end of their tunnel. Murrayfield will be a big test for them tomorrow. If Wales are going to make anything of their new side, they have to go there and win, and if they do, then Cardiff will not be an easy place for anyone to visit.

Ireland and Scotland have, frankly,

been terrible in their build-up games, but I have learnt over the years never to discount the Scots. France have a good record in Dublin and a couple of pieces of magic could start them off on a roll, particularly since Ireland have dispensed with Paul Burke, who, if nothing else, could score points for them.

The Irish may give opponents a hard time up front, but they are now on their third stand-off half and have shown little sign of being able to create tries.

And what about England? The leading club sides, helped by an influx of overseas players, have started to change the way they want to play the game, but England are struggling to find a style that suits all the players in the team. For all his many qualities, it will be difficult for Phil de Glanville to make a massive impact from centre — he needs good decisions from the key area of No 8, No 9 and No 10, and just at the moment it doesn't look as though the balance is right.

SPORTS LETTERS

Managers ill-prepared for job

From Mr C. Rossini

Sir, Kevin Keegan's resignation has understandably prompted much comment, but the real question has not been addressed, ie, why are managers being appointed with no preparation for the pressure and trials that lie ahead?

Compared with past times, when the likes of Joe Mercer, Don Revie and Bob Paisley had to serve an apprenticeship of sorts before securing a management post with football's elite, today, managers come straight off the pitch to don the boss's hat. Little

wonder then that some feel the strain, given the pressures and profile of the modern game.

Compared with Italy, where all coaches have to be qualified and registered and serve time in the lower leagues before promotion to a Serie A club, this is not satisfactory and I suspect that we shall see more Keegan-type casualties until the present pattern changes.

Yours faithfully,
C. ROSSINI,
La Stette House,
Harwich,
Essex.

Difficult process

From Mr Dominick Shirley

Sir, I write with reference to Mr Angus Irvine's letter about the decline of cricket in state schools (January 10).

I believe the regeneration of cricket in England will prove much harder than most, including the Prime Minister, imagine.

Though a historian, I also ran cricket at a Salisbury grammar school from 1969 to 1984. Despite criticism, then in vogue, on the grounds of expense, ethos, elitism, irrelevance, time and space wasted, I managed to keep first XI fixtures going, even on Saturdays.

But by 1975 all the other grammar schools within a 50-mile radius had either gone private or comprehensive. Two, at Shaftesbury and Dorchester, had built sixth-form complexes on their first XI cricket squares (illustrating the climate of the times).

My first XI fixtures had now to be with the likes of Sherborne, Cranford, Marlborough, Winchester and Brynston, who welcomed practice for their emerging A teams. But the old structure of cricket for all classes (as long as academically they made grammar selection in our case) had gone.

Is this perhaps why the professional bowlers either

from grammar or secondary modern — Trueman, Tyson, Loader, Willis (produced upon the poorly maintained state school pitches of the Forties, Fifties and Sixties) have gone? Escape from constraints for Trueman and Larwood also encouraged cricketing prowess, but happily this spur cannot be replicated. The same poor pitches and the exuberance of youth meant that spin bowling outside public schools was rarely rated.

Laker, Lock and Wardle took years and county expertise to develop fully. Now, I think, with fine, privately-maintained cricket squares, or all-weather pitches, the young may find the emulation of Shane Warne more rewarding, exciting and glamorous than hours of fast bowling.

We may occasionally produce a wonder (especially in bowling) like Boham, but there will be a shallowness (so crucial if a star lines form like Gough or Cook) which great depth in the post-war years never allowed.

A cricket tradition takes years to evolve; 1965-1990 tried to marginalise it. If, by 2015, we are as competitive as we were in the 1960s, I shall be delighted and surprised.

Yours faithfully,
DOMINICK SHIRLEY,
November Cottage,
Bowerchalke,
Salisbury, Wiltshire.

Before their time

From Mr P. D. O'Connor

Sir, John Bryant's tongue-in-cheek look at athletic clothing for icy weather (Bryant's Eye, January 9) correctly stated that running tights were not available in shops in the 1950s. But perhaps the Queens Park Harriers cross-country team was before its time in devising a substitute.

At my wife's suggestion I purchased half a dozen pairs of men's lightweight "long johns" — shrunken and dyed black, we wore them under coloured shorts for training runs in bitter weather.

Six of us changed regularly at my flat in Paddington. As we made our way out into the cold night wearing our new training aid for the first time,

my wife and children laughed long and loud, as did bemused pedestrians on a hill by Edgware Road. In Hyde Park, "ladies of the night" dispensed some friendly, ribald comments.

A few evenings later we grouped together, in the park to start our main run. A vigilant policeman came racing across, North Carriage Drive, convinced that he had uncovered a sordid male sex club. We could hardly run for laughter.

The converted "long johns" were ideal for keeping our leg muscles warm. Perhaps I should have applied for a patent.

Yours faithfully,
P. D. O'CONNOR,
8 Oakdale Gardens,
Lifford, Essex.

Kicker on board

From Mr Terence J. King

Sir, Because "... we have not had a kicker before", Dick Best, the Harlequins coach, seems to have convinced his club and everyone else that it was worth paying an extravagant fee for the 18 months of Thierry Lacroix's services (report, January 6).

Besides the detrimental effect such foreign signings can have on the development of the English game in the long term, Best ought to be reminded that he already has an outstanding kicker and all he

needs to do is play him. Before the present season began Best managed to coax Michael Corcoran from London Irish where he was having an outstanding career as a prolific points scorer and kicker par excellence. So why was it necessary to spend the reported £250,000 for Lacroix? Money seems to be just like conflict in the minds of some professional football and rugby clubs at present.

Yours faithfully,
TERENCE J. KING,
Whitegate,
Balgain's Lane,
Windlesham, Surrey.

Adding some bite

From Mr Alex C. Moran

Sir, Your report (January 9) that Richmond rugby union club "are ready to sign Atherton" will have raised the

spirits of cricket fans throughout the country.

Perhaps the same club could be persuaded to exchange a suitably grizzled forward to take his place in New Zealand and put some bite back into the England team.

Yours faithfully,
A.C. MORAN,
24 Latham Drive,
Newlands,
Glasgow.

Sports Letters may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5211. They should include a daytime telephone number.

Wainwright in line to play dual leading role

Mark Souster on the man aiming to guide Scotland to the grand slam and enhance his claims to captain the British Isles

Rob Wainwright would gladly press the erse button on the past six months of his professional life. Serious injury prevented him from playing rugby and his high-profile role in somewhat acrimonious contract negotiations during the autumn — at one point the players boycotted a training session — led his detractors at the Scottish Rugby Union to brand him a rabble-rouser.

He lost the captaincy to Gregor Townsend, there were rumours of abusive late-night telephone calls to his house from individuals at Murrayfield — although this is a subject on which he refuses to be drawn — and

'If you have tasted it, it's hard to step backwards'

suddenly the image of a man who could do little wrong was denied, if not his confidence. It did not help that he had posed *à la* Rob Roy in, a tabloid newspaper before the meeting with England last March, an experience that still fills him with embarrassment and regret. It all lent weight to the impression that he was losing the plot.

"It was a fairly stressful time," Wainwright said this week. "It has been a tedious period for the players, but for the paying public and the viewers I think it's been even more tedious. Hopefully, it is all laid to rest."

Indeed, the new year finds him in fine fettle, upbeat once again about his own, and Scotland's, prospects. He has a new house deep in his

beloved Scottish countryside near Kinross, promotion to the rank of major, and finally the confidence as a player that his body is not about to fall apart. He can concentrate on the business of rugby and the job in hand, beating Wales tomorrow. Reinstatement as captain is a welcome bonus.

"It is like international rugby by itself," Wainwright said. "It is a bit of a drug — once you have tasted it, it is very hard to take a step backwards. Potentially, it would have been hard to be just another one of the boys. Ask Will Carling; he must be struggling at the moment with similar emotions; but it is a joy to be back involved with the side."

"My initial timetable was to try to get back in time for the Australia game, but I had to sacrifice the first half of the season to get back for the second. I just made it. I have had four games in three weeks. It has been fairly busy, but that is what I needed."

So what of Scotland's chances this season? "Well we are in a period of transition," he said. "There have been a considerable number of changes from this time last year. We have got to make sure that the young players and the new players fit in as comfortably as possible and we get down to playing the sort of rugby we played last year and incorporating the lessons we learnt in New Zealand."

For the past two years commentators, including one



After a frustrating time sidelined by injury, Wainwright is confident about Scotland's chances in the five nations'

who famously dismissed Scotland's cause in 1996 as "potentially hopeless", have been made to eat their words.

"They have learnt their lesson," Wainwright said. "If we win our first game, which I feel we can, it sets us up for the rest of the five nations'. Then we have got to go to Twickenham. The last time we beat them was 1990, a generation of players ago. That is going to be very challenging and yet I have a sneaking feeling that this year might be the year we finally do something against

England. They are the bookies' favourites, but the bookies are a bit short of imagination sometimes."

"It is difficult to judge how good Wales are. The return of the rugby league dissidents has strengthened their case, but they have still got to form a team. They have always had talented players, but in recent years have not managed to blend them into a side that draws cohesively together. Also, they are coming up to Murrayfield, where they haven't won since 1985. It is an

intimidating place for them to come to."

The prospect of a place on the British Isles tour to South Africa this summer lends added spice to the five nations' championship this season and, inevitably, to who will be their captain. Wainwright is considered a front runner and Fran Cotton, the Lions manager, is a known admirer.

"I think talk of the captaincy is all a bit premature," Wainwright said. "The players are going to be picked on the

strength of their five nations' the same applies to the captaincy. But the Lions are in the back of my mind; you can't ignore speculation. You just try to ignore the questions when you can. The key issue is that Fran Cotton doesn't want a captain who cannot be sure of his place. It's happened in the past and upset the whole balance of the tour."

Anyway, first things first. "We are aiming to get a grand slam," he said. "The only way to do that is to start by beating Wales."

FOOTBALL: FERGUSON SETS DATE FOR RETIREMENT AS MANAGER AND END OF SUCCESSFUL ERA AT OLD TRAFFORD

Allardyce follows Dalglish into high-pressure post

By RICHARD HOBSON AND PETER BALL

FOR the second time in three days, the Magpies made a managerial appointment yesterday. However, in contrast to the media circus that squeezed into St James' Park for the coronation of Kenny Dalglish on Tuesday evening, just seven reporters and two photographers were at Meadow Lane for the announcement of Sam Allardyce as the new manager of Notts County, who share the same nickname as Newcastle United.

Pressure, though, remains the buzz-word. County are second from bottom in the Nationwide League second division and Allardyce is their sixth manager — in less than three years. He was dismissed as manager of Blackpool in May last year and has been involved since with the youth team at Sunderland.

Allardyce, who has agreed an 18-month contract that will be extended by a further year if he manages to save the club from relegation, replaces Gary Strodger, who had been

managing on a temporary basis after the dismissal of Colin Murphy and Steve Thompson before Christmas.

Alex Ferguson, whose Manchester United team have dominated English football this decade, has set a provisional retirement date, saying that he intends to leave Old Trafford in 3½ years' time. "I can see the finishing line," Ferguson said yesterday. "When this contract runs out, I will be 58 and I can't see me continuing as manager beyond that." If Ferguson does retire then, he will have completed 13 years at the club,

winning every trophy except, so far, the European Cup, and success in that competition in the next three years might persuade him that he is at last satisfied.

Fabrizio Ravanelli is not the only Italian who appears to be less than happy with his move from Serie A to the Premiership. Yesterday, Gianluca Vialli, Ravanelli's striking partner for Juventus, the European champions, last season, said that he was not happy with his situation at Chelsea.

Speaking on Italian television, Vialli, who has failed to win back a

place in the Chelsea side after a spell out with injury, said: "I did not come here to have a holiday or to have fun. I came to do well, to become a legend in London at Chelsea. Being on the bench makes me frustrated. I hope things change, I'm not willing to put up with it much longer."

Leicester City made Matt Elliott, 28, their record signing yesterday when they bought him for £1.6 million from Oxford United, sending off competition from Southampton and Sheffield Wednesday for the central defender.

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More agony for Auntie?

AS AND SANCHEZ VICA

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WATCH THEM ON A **SAMSUNG** WIDESCREEN

Fiery Tarango talks up his chances

1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered. This involves understanding the context and the specific requirements of the task.

Tarango unleashes a two-fisted return during his second-round victory over Rosset in Melbourne

[illegible]

Davenport improves his managerial prospects

Number of hauls	<i>P. setiferus</i> (%)	<i>P. setiferus</i> + <i>P. setiferus</i> + <i>P. setiferus</i> (%)
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2	~20	~10
3	~30	~10
4	~40	~10
5	~50	~10
6	~60	~10
7	~70	~10
8	~80	~10
9	~90	~10
10	~95	~10

OLD FASHION

AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN CRICKLEWOOD

FILMS LOSE THEIR EDGE UNLESS YOU WATCH THEM ON A **SAMSUNG** WIDESCREEN

Bad business as usual for Taggart followers

One day I'm going to start my own cult. None of your happy-clappy, fluffy-fishy nonsense — my cult will be founded on the belief that true spiritual enlightenment can only be attained by a selfless dedication to grumpiness. Members will dress in undifferentiated shades of taupe, spend endless hours rhythmically chanting the special mantra (but not groan, but not groan), and pass periods of quiet reflection searching for the secret messages contained in out-of-date volumes of *Yellow Pages*.

But until the glorious coming of the Children of the New Bureau, we'll have to make do with television's idea of cults, as we did once again last night as we watched Taggart (ITV) story go underway. The Children of the New Millennium giggle in the way they did on the planets Captain Kirk used to beam down to when he hadn't been kissed for a long time. They

also wear the sort of frocks that gave Laura Ashley a bad name and believe the world is going to end on September 22, 2012. "Can't you be a bit more precise?" asked DS Reid (Blythe Duff). She wasn't taking this seriously — not yet. Nor, I'm afraid, was I. Do you remember when Taggart used to be totally impenetrable for at least the first half-hour. Oh, happy days. Last night's opener began with two garden-centre employees, rescuing/kidnapping Louise/Charity from the cult — aided and abetted by a Vietnamese pot-bellied pig, improbable, I grant you, but hardly impenetrable. Shortly afterwards, the cult members led by the suitably charismatic David (Nicholas Clay) rescued/kidnapped Charity/Louise back again. "Hang on," bellowed Jardine (James Macpherson). "Can we just establish who's supposed to have kidnapped whom?" Don't you love a police

man with a grasp of grammar? Very soon, however, neither kidnapping nor grammar mattered. Someone had murdered Louise's parents and stuck them in their naff, garden-centre fountain. Then somebody murdered Jardine's minister, pausing only to fill the church with a plague of frogs. Then Reid found the long-dead body of a former cult member, together with his long-dead dog. This, at last, was getting more like it.

But still not nearly like it enough. The humour element continues to be poorly judged, with know-it-all DC Fraser (no marks for guessing who got to deliver "Beware false prophets...") but I do know that having Superintendent McVitie (Ian Anderson) sign up for evening classes in a stout nail and good pair of pliers, so it was probably a good thing that he was not on the menu

REVIEW



Matthew Bond

dialogue. Perhaps I missed the episode with the Damascus conversion that allowed Jardine to trade biblical quotations with David (no marks for guessing who got to deliver "Beware false prophets...") but I do know that having Superintendent McVitie (Ian Anderson) sign up for evening classes in a stout nail and good pair of pliers, so it was probably a good thing that he was not on the menu

of TV Dinners (Channel 4), which I am increasingly convinced is the best television comedy show since *Ready, Steady, Cook*. Somebody at Channel 4 obviously agrees as the show is already back for a second series.

The key to its success is that it involves real people (complete with real foibles) who have only one thing in common: a passion for entertaining. As eccentricities go, it is difficult to think of one that is more attractive or makes better television. Last night's programme was beautifully balanced, contrasting the bistro cooking of a wonderfully fussy Liverpool builder with a New Age couple who prepared their own vegetarian wedding breakfast after trying fairly innocently but deeply toasting a knot in Avebury ring. According to Tommy, the key to a happy marriage was homemade pesto sauce. "It's love food."

It's certainly lovely television. I have deliberately left *Dispatches*, (Channel 4) until last — partly to leave the maximum amount of time for the Channel 4 lawyers to ring and say it wasn't going out and partly to leave me the minimum amount of space to repeat any of the quite breathtaking allegations that were flying around. Suffice it to say, they involved Neil Hamilton, Ian Greer, plump brown envelopes and Mohamed Al Fayed. It may not have been the most objective documentary ever, but it was certainly one of the most entertaining, with Fayed — once you were attuned to his accent — in cracking form. He described Hamilton in terms that can only be described as unparliamentary. The praiseworthy thrust of the well-placed report was that Parliament is not fit to govern itself, let alone us. If only half of what was alleged was true, I think it proved its point.

- BBC1**
- 6.00am BUSINESS BREAKFAST (87524)
 - 7.00am BBC BREAKFAST NEWS (1) (82882)
 - 9.00am BREAKFAST NEWS EXTRA (1) (407833)
 - 9.20am ALL OVER THE SHOP (877307)
 - 9.45am KILROY (197465)
 - 10.30am CANT COOK, WONT COOK (27362)
 - 11.00am NEWS (1) and weather (826011)
 - 11.05am THE REALLY USEFUL SHOW (2543508)
 - 11.45am SMILLIE'S PEOPLE (805467)
 - 12.00pm NEWS (1) REGIONAL NEWS and weather (785830)
 - 12.05pm THE ALPHABET GAME (806814)
 - 12.30pm GOING FOR A SONG (473339)
 - 12.55pm THE WEATHER SHOW (2744036)
 - 1.00pm NEWS (1) and weather (826369)
 - 1.30pm REGIONAL NEWS (4451763)
 - 1.40pm NEIGHBOURS: Damon loses his temper (1) (7472727)
 - 2.05pm FILM: Heart of a Child (1994) starring Ann Jillian, Michele Green and Terry O'Quinn. A woman in the eighth month of pregnancy discovers her unborn baby has a rare condition which means she won't survive after birth; her husband agrees to donate the unborn child's organs to another needy infant. Directed by Sandra Stern (894231)
 - 3.30pm LAYDAYS (374385) 5.30pm The Friday Zone (110878) 4.55pm Newsnight: The plight of the Romanian street-children (1) (784733) 5.10pm Blue Peter (1121992)
 - 5.35pm NEWS (1) (1) (861749)
 - 6.00pm NEWS (1) and weather (901)
 - 6.30pm NEWSROOM SOUTHEAST (253)
 - 7.00pm BIG BREAK: Jim Davidson introduces the snooker-based gameshow with professional players Ray Reardon, Jason Fergan and Mick Price potting prizes for contestants (1) (2271)
 - 7.30pm TOP OF THE POPS (1) (785)
 - 8.00pm TONY BULLMORE — THE GREAT SURVIVOR: The British yachtman tells Martin Bashir his extraordinary tale of survival and rescue in the Southern Ocean (8949)
 - 9.30pm NOELS' TELL YOUNG: Noel Edmonds on television, dance and fashion of 1971, quizzing actor Simon Williams, 26 years ago a star of *Upstairs, Downstairs*, and Jim Bowen (1) (5456)
 - 9.00pm NEWS (1) and weather (7036)
 - 9.30pm TEXAS JUSTICE: True-life story of the wealthiest man ever to be tried for murder in the United States. With Peter Strauss and Heather Locklear (1/2) (1) (58340)
 - 10.00pm FIVE NATIONS PREVIEW: Eddie Butler looks forward to rugby union's five nations' championship (8525497)
 - 11.25pm FILM: Funny about Love (1991) starring Gene Wilder, Christine Loh and Mary Stuart Masterson. When a successful cartoonist and his caterer wife have trouble starting a family, he agrees to conceive with a young surrogate mum. Directed by Leonard Nimoy (1) (820307) WALES: 11.25pm Indoor Bowls (232253) 12.00am FILM: Funny about Love (850377) 1.00am News headlines (2363437)
 - 1.00am WEATHER (5556586)

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCode
The numbers next to each TV programme listing are Video PlusCode numbers, which allow you to programme your video recorder to record a particular programme. The numbers in the Video PlusCode for the programme you wish to record. VideoPlus+ (+), VideoPlus (+) and Video PlusCode (+) are trademarks of Genesis Development Ltd.

- BBC2**
- 6.00am OPEN UNIVERSITY: Utilitarianism — A Lecture by Bernard Williams (4105659)
 - 6.25pm Crime and Punishment (4117484)
 - 6.50pm Victorian Ways of Death (4285123)
 - 7.15pm Sea View News (804272) 7.30pm Heidi (1) The Heidi Series (855044)
 - 7.55pm The Really Wild Show (2307104)
 - 8.20pm Just So Stories (3845748) 8.35pm The Record (3454858) 8.50pm Daytime on Two: The French Experience (4714123) 9.15pm The Statistics Collection (2321014) 9.45pm Watch (828455) 10.00pm Playdays (7752)
 - 10.30pm Hotch Potch House (555044)
 - 10.50pm Focus (420568) 11.00pm Look and Read (599622) 11.30pm Short-Circuit (5239104) 11.40pm English Time (603790)
 - 12.00pm English File (49104) 12.30pm Working Lunch (76749) 12.50pm Scene (53811) 1.30pm LE CUP (4480524) 1.45pm Words and Pictures (4483430) 2.00pm Just So Stories (3845748)
 - 2.10pm SPORT ON FRIDAY: Tim Henman's third round match against Michael Chang in the Australian Open; the English Open Table Tennis final; and a preview of the weekend's five nations' rugby union matches. WALES: Bowls (858007)
 - 3.55pm NEWS (243920)
 - 4.00pm TODAY'S THE DAY (494) 4.30pm Ready, Steady, Cook (678) 5.00pm Esther (8307) 5.30pm Going, Going, Gone (830)
 - 6.00pm AUSTRALIAN OPEN TENNIS: Tim Henman's third round match against Michael Chang, the No. 2 seed (47478)
 - 7.00pm TIMEWATCH: KAMIKAZE: Second World War kamikaze pilots recall what it was like to live with the ever-present fear of being killed in action (1) (148901) (18049)
 - 7.50pm A WEEK TO REMEMBER (b/w) (18049)
 - 8.00pm WILDERNESS WALKS: Cameron McNeil explores the hills of Mid Wales accompanied by the Shadow Health Secretary, Chris Smith (1) (7291)
 - 8.30pm GARDENING FROM SCRATCH: Advice for absolute beginners (1) (7) (3098)



Craig Charles returns (9.00pm)

- 9.00pm RED DWARF: New series. As the crew struggle to make an improbable come-back from the dead, Lister embarks on an intergalactic quest for vindictive (1) (5878)
- 9.30pm NEVER MIND THE BUZZCOCKS (1) (40833)
- 10.00pm ROOM 101 with Richard Wilson (1) (40833)
- 10.30pm NEWSNIGHT (1) (618868)
- 11.15pm SPACE: ABOVE AND BEYOND Sci-Fi adventures (851611)
- 12.00pm FILM: A Night in the Life of Jimmy Reardon (1988) starring River Phoenix and Mercedes Barber. A sensitive 17-year-old's romantic plan to track his true love down to Hawaii sets him on a collision course with his marinet father. Directed by William Richert (88091)
- 1.30am WEATHER (2347498)

- CHOICE**
- Traveling Light Channel 4, 3.30pm
 - Land's End to John O'Grady is not far enough for Tim Grundy and his cameraman, Peter Hamilton. Their journey across Britain starts at Bishop's Rock lighthouse on the Isles of Scilly and will end at Muckle Flugga on the northern tip of the Shetland Islands. Their transport will be anything, ancient and modern, that comes conveniently to hand and the emphasis will be on local history and eccentric locals. What sets the series apart from most others of its kind is that viewers will have the chance to influence the itinerary by suggesting routes and places to visit. How much notice Grundy and Hamilton take of these suggestions remains to be seen. Today's leg of the journey takes the pair to Treosco and St Mary's and then on to the Cornish mainland for a visit to (what else?) a tin mine.

- Benjamin Revisited Channel 4, 8.00pm
- More black-and-white nostalgia sees John Benjamin mooching round the West Country in the early 1960s and being appalled by the cars and lorries rumbling through its once peaceful towns. "Traffic-murdered" is his phrase for first Chippenhams and then Crewkerne and Benjamin has the footage to prove it. But being Benjamin he knows how to get off the overcast track and discover a medieval church here, a Tudor house there and a strong candidate for the prettiest street in England. But the railway, Benjamin's great love, is also a destroyer. In another short film he goes to Northlew in Devon. Once it was almost a town. But when the railway opened near by, Northlew's trade went with it. By Benjamin's visit in 1962 the place is almost deserted. "Traffic," muses the future Port Laureate, "changes everything."

- Red Dwarf: Ticks to Ride BBC2, 9.00pm
- Although repeats have obscured the fact, it is three years since the last new series of the science fiction spoof ended with what has become one of the longest cliffhangers in television history. As the final credits rolled the crew were dead, killed by their future selves. But Sherlock Holmes is not the only character to have two fictional lives and at a stroke of the scriptwriter's pen (or, more likely, a tap on his computer keyboard) Lister, Kryten, Cat and Rimmer are back as if they had never gone away. But, horror of horrors, curvy supplies have run out, much to the grief of Craig Charles' Lister. Given the nature of the show it is only logical that the curvy hunt should send the lads back to Dallas in 1963, and to the building where a gunman is poised to kill President Kennedy. From there invention knows no bounds.

- The Ruth Rendell Mysteries: Bribery and Corruption ITV, 9.00pm
- An attractive seaside town somewhere in the south of England provides the deceptively benign backdrop to a typical Rendell tale of troubled relationships and tortured souls. When a woman's body is fished out of the harbour, clearly dead before it ever made the surface, the police are thrown up two obvious suspects. One is her estranged husband (Paul Freeman), the other her secret lover (Tim Woodward). But this being Rendell it is more complicated than that and what starts as a relatively simple whodunnit becomes a complex web of intrigue. This latest Rendell series is based on her short stories and sometimes the material has been stretched thin. *Bribery and Corruption* is not only spread over two episodes but contains more than sufficient to justify them.

- HTV**
- 6.00am GMTV (162033)
 - 9.25am WIN, LOSE OR DRAW (8752098)
 - 9.55am REGIONAL NEWS (5555123)
 - 10.00pm THE TIME, THE PLACE (71388)
 - 10.30pm THIS MORNING (83115307)
 - 12.00pm REGIONAL NEWS (7854814)
 - 12.30pm NEWS (1) and weather (4757765)
 - 12.55pm WISH YOU WERE HERE? (1) (1) (473456)
 - 1.25pm HOME AND AWAY (1) (7350177)
 - 1.55pm MURDER, SHE WROTE (818782)
 - 2.50pm GET A LIFE! (8292814)
 - 3.00pm NEWS (8262307)
 - 3.25pm REGIONAL NEWS (8261678)
 - 3.30pm ROSIE AND JIM (314688) 3.40pm Daily Duck (3241433) 3.55pm Zzap! (3731291) 4.15pm Jumanji (1504543) 4.40pm Gladiators: Train 2 Win (525712)
 - 5.10pm A COUNTRY PRACTICE (8997098)
 - 5.40pm NEWS (1) and weather (504524)
 - 6.00pm HOME AND AWAY (1) (1) (288949)
 - 6.25pm HTV NEWS (1) (768123)
 - 7.00pm WHEEL OF FORTUNE: Hosted by Bradley Walsh (1) (2389)
 - 7.30pm CORONATION STREET: Ken and Denise discuss what would be best for Denise's future (1) (833)
 - 8.00pm THE BILL: Garfield objects when his officers are forced to work with security guards — but they may be his only hope of solving a vicious mugging and burglary (1) (1017)
 - 8.30pm EYE SPY: Salma Scott finds out how police in Hong Kong used video cameras to fight the multi-million-pound trade in smuggled goods and meets police dogs trained to use cameras (1) (7104)

- As HTV West except:
- 12.00pm-12.30pm ILLUMINATIONS (7854814)
- 12.55pm-1.25pm EMERALD (4732456)
- 1.55pm HIGH ROAD (7472630)
- 5.10-5.40pm HOME AND AWAY (8997098)
- 6.00-7.00pm WESTCOUNTRY LIVE presented by David Foster and Alison Johns (71291)

- As HTV West except:
- 12.55pm-1.25pm A COUNTRY PRACTICE (4732456)
- 1.55pm JUSTICE OF THE LAND (7472630)
- 2.25-3.20pm MURDER, SHE WROTE (8239727)
- 5.10-5.40pm HOME AND AWAY (8997098)
- 6.00-7.00pm MERIDIAN TONIGHT (71291)
- 5.00am FRESHSCREEN (84976)

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- 12.15pm ANGLIA AIR WATCH (7873949)
- 12.55pm-1.25pm CROSSWITS (4732456)
- 1.50pm MURDER, SHE WROTE: For Whom the Bell Tolls. Jessica investigates the murder of the owner of three New York buildings. Starring Angela Lansbury and Herbert Ross (8179901)
- 2.50-3.00pm TIMPSON'S COUNTRY CHURCHES: John Timpson uncovers some unusual East Anglian church memorials, including one to St Uncumber, a girl who grew a beard to escape marriage (8292814)
- 5.10-5.40pm SHORTLAND STREET (8997098)
- 6.25-7.00pm ANGLIA NEWS (788123)
- 10.25pm ANGLIA AIR WATCH (408330)

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- 7.00pm THE BIG BREAKFAST (17320) 9.00pm BEWITCHED (54038) 9.30pm YSGOLION (800956) 12.00pm COLLECTOR'S LOT (34272) 12.30pm HERE'S ONE I MADE EARLIER (81814) 1.00pm SLOT MEITHRIN (18307) 1.30pm NEWS (8262307) 1.55pm FRANCES BISSON'S WESTCOUNTRY KITCHEN (727) 1.00pm FIFTEEN-TO-ONE (562) 4.30pm CLASSIC TRAINS (746) 5.00pm PUMP (3475) 5.30pm COUNTDOWN (758) 6.00pm NEWYODION (802678) 6.05pm HENO (366727) 6.35pm GAIK AM (846420) 7.00pm POBOL Y GWYM (47058) 7.25pm SIOCE GELF (40522) 8.00pm CERN (8262307) 8.30pm NEWYODION (1494) 9.00pm PAWB AT FARM (580543) 9.45pm POBOL Y GWYM (827388) 10.00pm BROOKSIDE (35901) 10.30pm CAPTAIN BUTLER (895307) 11.05pm THE GIRLIE SHOW (454830) 11.35pm TFI FRIDAY (242291) 12.00am DANI DARES (777787) 1.00pm BLANKET BLANKET BLANKET (589505) 3.00pm FILM: PLAY IT COOL (32234)

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LYNNE TRUSS 42

Ready to call
time on men
behaving badly

SPORT

TENNIS 42

Paying lip service
to Tarango's
bid for credibility



FRIDAY JANUARY 17 1997

Stress fracture that broke Keegan's spirit

By ROB HUGHES, FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

WITH the fog thickening outside, and cigar smoke growing denser in the boardroom, the Newcastle United chairman and directors stayed long into the night willing to clear some air on the end of the Kevin Keegan years. After Kenny Dalglish's team had progressed in the FA Cup on Wednesday, the consensus was that Keegan, the cavalier, had driven himself so hard that anxiety had become a compulsion.

"We have flown by the seat of our pants," Sir John Hall, Keegan's chairman through five astonishing years, said. "But he's gone. I cannot change that. We had known from the end of last season that Kevin felt he had taken this club as far as he could. I tried, we all tried, to dissuade him. I kept hoping that he would come through it, but in the end he decided against that. I'll always feel privileged and proud to have been part of the Keegan years, but the game, the demands, are changing, and Newcastle United have to be ready."

Sir John, Freddie Fletcher, the Newcastle chief executive, and other directors insisted that Keegan was not pushed because of the announcement yesterday of the flotation of shares, aimed at bringing in upwards of £50 million, restructuring the club and clearing some of its debts. "The man is a perfectionist," Sir John said.

Keegan had, apparently, blamed himself for the manner in which his team, built at such enormous cost, had allowed the championship to slip away last season after they had led Manchester United by 12 points. He talked, not week by week but periodically, of handing the club on, as it eventually was this week to Dalglish. The resistance to that talk was finally broken on the Monday after Newcastle's drawn FA Cup tie away to Charlton Athletic.

Fletcher, who worked daily on the administration of Keegan's work, was aware that the manager had walked out of another press conference, this time after being confronted over a *Sunday Mirror* story saying that he



was about to resign. Next morning after training, Fletcher, realising that the lid could no longer be kept on Keegan's mood, told him that the club could not lie in the face of the revelations. It was Fletcher, not as had been reported the City bankers, who put it to Keegan that, if he intended to leave, he should go straight away. Suggestions that Keegan's wife, Jean, was ill were exaggerated. She had a dose of flu, though obviously Keegan was bound to transmit his growing disaffection, the joy turning to fear of failure, to his family. Jean Keegan could not forget the day in 1976 when, having pushed his body to the point of collapse during a competitive

'Match-rigging' trial 6
Allardyce's task 40

BBC *Superstars* event in London, he had blanked out in the car as she drove him home. A specialist, treating him for serious intestinal pain, told Keegan: "The human body is designed to run at 70mph; you have been trying to run at 110mph. You are lucky — it could have been your brain or your heart."

Recalling this at the training ground at Maiden Castle, Durham, recently, Keegan admitted that he found it difficult to say no to all manner of public appearances. He felt it his duty to respond to requests of people who, like himself in boyhood, had very little in their lives and were inspired by the stars of the game. And being poor at delegating, he could surround himself with so many assistants, but took virtually all of the stress on himself.

Once Keegan accepted

Fletcher's ultimatum, Newcastle had no ready-made replacement lined up. Fletcher, though, with Freddie Shepherd, the vice-chairman, and Douglas Hall, a director and son of Sir John, were soon discussing terms with Dalglish, while Sir John was trying to persuade Bobby Robson in Barcelona. Sir John denies that there was ever "a family feud" between himself and his son. He describes the process as normal company business, sounding out potential candidates, of which there were two more — unnamed — who were interviewed by Fletcher.

Sir John, having driven Newcastle towards what he expects to be a European league early in the new millennium, and having expanded the club into rugby, a planned academy of sport, a school of sports science and a new, 55,000-seat stadium, will not stand down as chairman, though equally, he will not lead the new and separate shareholding company when it is launched, probably in March.

Instead, with Dalglish, Sir John intends to oversee the sports academy, to build a schooling and grooming facility the equal of Ajax of Amsterdam. "Even in Bosman times, there is talent in the North East that should be coming through for the future of this club," he said.

Sir John regards the difference between Robson and Dalglish this way: "They are two very, very successful men. Kenny has done it here in England, and Bobby on a European scale. I've talked to Kenny now, I realise there is always a story behind the story when it comes to allegations that he couldn't take the pressure at Liverpool, and I'm sure he will analyse this club very quickly, sure that he will make changes."

The changes, indeed, from a Newcastle United era that entertained us beyond compare in recent times, to one with a new manager whose brief is to be as pragmatic as he likes, but to win. Dalglish is a past master at that, but Tyneside may lose some fun in the process.

Russell revels in role reversal



After his enforced absence as England substitute fielder to run out Mark Greatbatch with a direct throw to help England to victory over a Select XI in New Zealand, Alec Stewart, who replaced Russell behind the stumps, congratulates him. Report, page 41

Scotland hooker pulls out with neck injury

By MARK SOUSTER
AND DAVID HANDS

KEVIN MCKENZIE, the Stirling County hooker, has withdrawn from the Scotland rugby union team to play Wales at Murrayfield in the opening round of five nations' championship matches tomorrow. McKenzie, 28, has a neck injury and is replaced by Graham Ellis, of Currie, who wins his first cap. Steve Brotherton, of Melrose, joins the squad as a replacement.

There was better news of Gregor Townsend, who took a full part in training yesterday and showed no ill-effects from a shoulder injury.

Eight of the Scottish exiles, including Andy Reed and David Hilton, who are in the Scotland side, ended their six-month dispute with the Scottish Rugby Union and signed contracts worth up to £15,000 a man, plus win bonuses. Three players from Newcastle — Gary Armstrong, Doddie Weir and Peter Walton — and Ronnie Eriksson, of London

Rob Andrew 40
Upbeat Watnwright 40

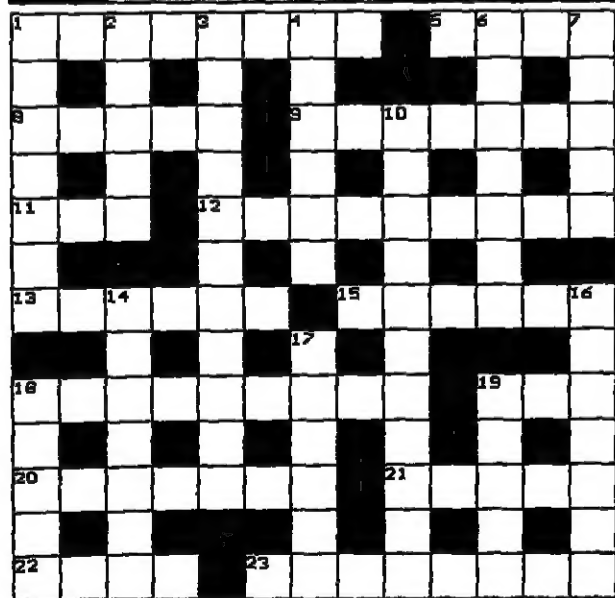
Scottish, are hoping to sign soon.

The International Rugby Football Board (IRFB), the game's ruling body, hopes to dispose of the vexed question of international eligibility when it concludes its annual meeting in Dublin today.

The board seeks to put legislation in place which will mean that, once a player has been chosen for one country — either for its first XV, or as a replacement, or in the second XV — then there will be no opportunity to appear for another country.

At present a three-year qualification period exists for players who consider switching countries; the situation particularly affects the Pacific nations, many of whose players have spent their lives in New Zealand or who may go to Australia, in the hope of finding a better standard of living. But such nations as Western Samoa and Fiji desperately need to protect their assets and, if global standards are to be improved, the IRFB needs to offer some shelter so that the few rich countries do not become richer.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 993

- ACROSS
- Veracious (3)
 - Specs; tricky situation to be on (4)
 - Relaxing; not 1 oc (5)
 - Strange (7)
 - Content (3)
 - Eg slip, cover (9)
 - Manly (6)
 - Pitiable person (6)
 - (Succession) from the first disciples (9)
 - Container; record on tape (3)
 - (Species) vanished (7)
 - Of sheep (5)
 - Urgent; very bad (4)
- DOWN
- Israeli city, with Jaffa (5,4)
 - Join (5)
 - Pretentious (11)
 - Extortionate lender (6)
 - Fall precipitately (7)
 - Bird's claw (5)
 - Regarded with suspicion (5,1,5)
 - Cockerel (7)
 - Nag (husband) (7)
 - Put garments on to (6)
 - Leading (5)
 - Leonard Marx (5)

The solution to 992 will be published Wednesday January 22

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Blyth tangled in rigging mystery

By EDWARD GORMAN
SAILING CORRESPONDENT

AFTER the succession of rig problems that befell the BT Global Challenge fleet during the Southern Ocean leg, the 14 yachts are going through a refit in Wellington, New Zealand, that is costing Chay Blyth, the race organiser, more than £100,000.

It was always planned to take the yachts out of the water at Wellington, but the scale of the work being undertaken reflects the concern that Blyth and his technical director, Andrew Roberts, have about the state of the rigs.

Every boat in the fleet is having almost all of its standing rigging replaced at a total cost of more than £50,000. Repairing *Concert* will cost at least as much again because she needs a new mast and all her standing rigging replaced.

The task presents a huge logistical challenge and a great deal of work that has to be completed well in advance of the start of the next leg, to Sydney, on February 9. The cost, which includes flying out parts made in Plymouth and Doncaster and employing three riggers, is being met from a "contingency budget". The bill could significantly

reduce Blyth's overall profit margin.

Roberts said that, despite the cost, there was no doubt in his or Blyth's minds that they had to install new rigs. "A very high proportion of what we are taking off is completely undamaged," he said. "But we can't take the risk. The race is too serious."

According to Roberts's latest findings, 11 boats suffered failure. Five had broken strands in the forestay, which runs from the masthead to the bow, with three of them showing similar deterioration in the backstay. Two yachts had broken

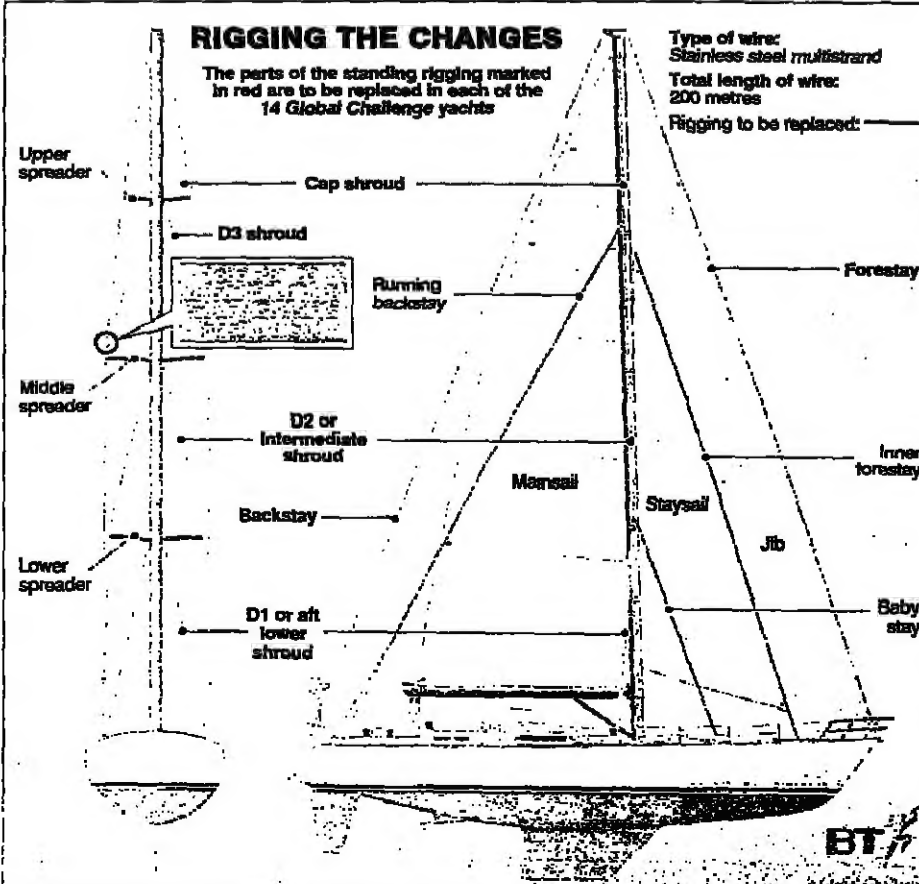
strands in the lower shrouds (D1), which connect the deck to the inboard end of the lower spreaders, and seven had strand failures in their starboard intermediate shroud (D2), which runs up to the inboard end of the middle spreaders.

Three of them also had a failure of a toggle, a fitting at the end of the wire, at the outboard end of the diagonal that runs between the top two sets of spreaders (D3) and which, on *Concert*, caused a dismasting.

In the previous race, four years ago, seven boats had rig problems and one was dismantled as a result of a faulty forestay fitting. This time, Roberts, who has already spent many hours analysing the wires and fittings, is still unsure of what is causing the failures. The faulty toggle has been identified and replaced but the strand failures remain a mystery.

In the past, identical rigging wire on Challenge yachts has lasted more than 100,000 miles before showing signs of fatigue. This time the wires have failed after just 16,000 miles of sailing, about 12,000 of which was made up of the first two legs of the race. Without the cause being pinpointed, the wires might fail again in a race that still has 20,000 miles to run.

Roberts is examining a number of theories. One is that the damage has been caused to starboard stays because the yachts have been on a starboard tack for the majority of the race. Another is that crews have been tightening stays incorrectly, causing the wires to twist. A third centres on a new design of spreader-end fitted at the beginning of the race that has led to movement that might, in turn, create extra stress on the wire.



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